

September 21, 2017

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

Present: Steve Arnold, Chair; Andy Bruziewicz, Vice Chair; Alan Broad, Tony Bruinink, Joe Faas, Norm Giffen, Larry Gordon, Don McCallum, Dan McMillan, Steve Miller, Frank Nemcek, Gerry Rupke, Cindy Scholten, Jerry Westgate, Muriel Wright

Absent: Mike Kelch, Betty Ann Mackinnon, John McCharles, Jeff Wesley

Staff Present: Brian McDougall, General Manager; Laura Biancolin, Agricultural Outreach Technician; Erin Carroll, Manager of Biology; Nicole Drumm, Communication Technician; Chris Durrand, IT/GIS Coordinator; Ashley Fletcher, Administrative Assistant/ Board Coordinator; Patty Hayman, Director of Planning; Erica Ogden, Planner; Tracy Prince, Director of Finance; Girish Sankar, Manager of Water Resources; Kelli Smith, Watershed Biologist; Jessica Van Zwol, Healthy Watershed Specialist.

Guests Present: Jennifer Burbidge, Kathleen Wyatt, Chris Hatt

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-17-100

Scholten - Bruinink

“That the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting, held June 22, 2017, be approved as distributed.”

CARRIED

The General Manager’s Report was presented:

Ontario Bill 139 - the Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act:

- today, the government brought forward the above Bill as the Order of the Day for second reading
- the Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Natural Resources and Forestry outlined the 2 new Acts proposed and proposed changes to 17 Acts included under Bill 139, underscored the reasons for the proposed changes and the public consultation that had been completed with regard to these changes
- the presentation of the Bill 139 was followed by more than 3 hours of debate

- notable issues brought forward in debate regarding Conservation Authorities included:
 - Large Bill impacting a great deal of legislation – Conservation Authorities Act update should have its own Bill
 - Provincial funding – on average, Authorities receive only 10% of their revenue from the province.... approximately 54% from their municipalities, 1% from the federal government, and the remaining 35% is raised through fees and fundraising
 - SCRCA – 2017 funding – Provincial 6%, Provincial Grant Other 11%, Federal 1%, Municipal 14%, Municipal Special Levy 4%, Reserves 10%, Self-Generated 54%
 - Ministers powers under regulations are too great
 - Authority Officers powers of entry changed to “without warrant”
 - appointment of Board Members – special requirements
 - local decision making – Conservation Authorities more provincial input & oversight / Local Planning Tribunals less provincial input & oversight
 - “Rogue” Conservation Authorities – Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

Draft Action Plan for Lake Erie Phosphorous:

- subsequent to submitted our comments on the EBR posting we were contacted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to discuss all the Conservation Authority submission as a group
- Authority comments were reviewed and streamlined at a meeting in July and a small group was appointed to continue to provide comment and input to the federal and provincial Ministries as they move toward a final draft of the Action Plan
- Jo-Anne Rzdcki of Conservation Ontario, Richard Wyma, General Manager of Eseex Region CA and I have continued discussion with the Ministries throughout the summer and into the fall
- Conservation Authorities have been captured in the document as an important delivery partner
- however, many groups are being asked to contribute to the actions in the Action Plan and everyone wants to ensure that they are recognized

Chloride Issues in the Great Lakes:

- understanding that the issue of Phosphorous is paramount with Lake Erie – Chlorides are seen as a significant concern across the Great Lakes Basin
- the SCRCA has been invited to attend the Great Lakes Chloride Forum in early October to discuss the issue and available actions

The Forum is being hosted by the Toronto US Consulate General, Lake Simcoe Region CA, World Wildlife Fund and Gowling WLG

BD-17-101

Scholten-Wright

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the General Manager’s report, dated September 11, 2017.”

CARRIED

Conservation Ontario Council minutes of the June 26, 2017 meeting were reviewed.

Miller-Westgate

BD-17-102

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the minutes of the June 26, 2017, Conservation Ontario Council meeting minutes.”

CARRIED

- Further information and explanation regarding draft Conservation Authorities Act 28.2, cancellation of permits was requested.
- Specifically - if notice is required to cancel a permit what is the time frame for such a notice
 - Points of question (taken from proposed Bill 139 - the Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act.)
 - *Cancellation of permits*
 - *28.3 (1) An authority may cancel a permit issued under section 28.1 if it is of the opinion that the conditions of the permit have not been met or that the circumstances that are prescribed by regulation exist.*
 - *Notice*
 - *(2) Before cancelling a permit, an authority shall give a notice of intent to cancel to the permit holder indicating that the permit will be cancelled on a date specified in the notice unless the holder requests a hearing under subsection (3).*
 - No time frame has been provided for a notice in the proposed act

- Additional information may be included in the accompanying regulation however, our interpretation is that the notice and the cancellation can be served at the same time

Bruziewicz-Nemcek

BD-17-103

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the updates on business arising from the June 22, 2017, meeting.”

CARRIED

Conservation Areas:

- the Conservation Authority owns 15 conservation areas and manages 17 properties for the Foundation
- of those 15 conservation areas, six are managed by the local municipality and nine are operated by the Conservation Authority
- of these nine, three conservation areas are regional campgrounds which attract campers primarily from Southwestern Ontario
- our three regional campgrounds have over 500 campsites and 416 seasonal campers and are financially self-sufficient
- profits obtained from our campgrounds are used to offset capital improvements
- the 2017 camping season runs from Friday, April 28th to Thanksgiving Day

Marketing/Camping Statistics

Our conservation areas have been marketed in the following publications or events in 2017:

- Sarnia Lambton and Chatham-Kent Tourism Guide
- Camping ad has been placed on MyFm website
- Conservation Ontario – “Your Guide to Conservation Areas”
- Central Lambton Travel Guide
- Hayter Publication’s Special Editions (4) “Cottage and Campers”
- Sarnia Art Walk (downtown Sarnia, June 3rd and 4th)
- For 2017, 416 seasonal campers are registered at our three campgrounds, down from 421 in 2016
 - Warwick: 190 seasonal campers registered (191 in 2016)
 - L.C. Henderson: 119 seasonal campers registered (123 in 2016)
 - A.W. Campbell: 107 seasonal campers registered (107 in 2016)

Warwick Conservation Area:

- a 24x32ft pole type storage shed has been constructed
- engineered wood chip playground protective surfacing has been installed under the main day use area play equipment

- the pool washroom hydro panel has been upgraded
- three sections of boardwalk have been installed on the White Pine trail
- hydro and water has been installed to two overflow campsites in the woodlot campground
- woodlot campground laundry shed has been renovated with new appliances, flooring, and plumbing
- 550-meters of new chip and dust trail have been developed around the perimeter of the 5-acre climate change tree growth plantation (Foundation)
- a fishing dock has been constructed on the main reservoir
- LED exterior lighting has been installed on two of the washroom buildings
- a mountain bike obstacle has been constructed along the bike cross trail

L.C. Henderson Conservation Area:

- the campground pool has been renovated with two new ladders and entrance railing
- 10 new picnic tables have been constructed
- one shower area has been upgraded with new shower surround and ceramic tile on the floor and walls
- a new sidewalk has been installed in front of the shower areas
- two new hydro panels have been installed, one in the main washroom building and one in the campground area
- LED lighting has been installed on the main washroom building and on two utility poles
- video surveillance equipment has been installed in and outside the gatehouse

A.W. Campbell Conservation Area:

- a new concrete side walk has been constructed at the pool washroom and visitor center
- permanent hydro (six 30 amp campsites) has been installed at the Campbell house group camp area
- water distribution pump house has been renovated with new internal and external siding and new internal plastic water lines
- 10 new picnic tables have been constructed
- upgrades have been completed at the main campground washroom (new concrete sidewalk) and at the gatehouse and entrance area (new signage and fee box)
- a weather station has also been installed on the property (Water Resources Department)

Keith McLean Conservation Lands (Foundation Property):

- Scott O'Brien was hired as the new Superintendent
- A new floor has been installed in the Kent Bridge Road pump house
- A trail identification sign has been installed at the main parking lot
- Lake Erie water levels are at a 30-year high resulting in one of the agricultural fields being partially flooded
- A tower agreement has been negotiated with Xplornet, the tower will be installed on Kent Bridge Line later this fall

Other Lands Activities:

- A 5-year tower lease has been negotiated with Cogeco Connexion Inc. for the existing tower and building at Peers Wetland CA
- A bench and concrete pad has been installed along the Strathroy North Valley Lands trail
- Property 97 in the McKeough Upstream Lands has undergone a 3-acre habitat restoration project, which involved the construction of two wetlands, the planting of a small tallgrass prairie and 1,000 hardwood trees (funded by Union Gas and Wildlife Habitat Canada)
- Approximately 680 meters of randomized tile drainage has been installed on two McKeough Upstream agricultural properties
- Two benches have been installed along the trail at the Peers Wetland CA (benches donated by Sydenham Field Naturalists)
- Existing tennis courts to be removed and new courts constructed at the Esli Dodge Conservation Area (project of Lambton Shores)

Gordon-Giffen

BD-17-104

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the Conservation Lands Update, dated August 29, 2017 on Conservation Areas, Foundation, and McKeough Lands including capital projects, facility improvements and camping trends in 2016.”

CARRIED

Highland Glen Conservation Area

- Approximately 40ft of new walkway has been installed along one side of the boat ramp, this will allow for more than one boat to dock at a time
- The existing walkway has been elevated in response to rising lake levels
- Approximately 84ft of existing seawall has been repaired by excavating and installing new tie back supports
- Armour stone has been re-positioned to provide better protection to the steel seawall

- Two LED solar marine beacon lights have been installed to guide boaters to the ramp and harbor area after dark
- Entrance roadway has been maintained with additional gravel and grading (Plympton-Wyoming)
- Beach access points have been re-graded
- Starting in 2017, fees are being charged for the use of the boat ramp and vehicle entry; fees are being collected through the MacKay Pay system, where payments are collected online or by phone
- Revenue collected will be used to offset future repair costs to the ramp, seawalls, and conservation area infrastructure
- To date, we have sold 65 seasonal boat ramp use passes (\$7,800.00); 203 day-use boat ramp passes (\$2,030.00); 9 seasonal vehicle-only passes (\$540.00); and 60 day-use vehicle passes (\$300.00) for a total revenue of \$10,670.00 before fees

**McMillan-Bruinink
BD-17-105**

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated August 29, 2017 on the Highland Glen Conservation Area summarizing capital improvements and revenues collected in 2017.”

CARRIED

- Mary Ann Buntrock (Chair) and Colleen Collins (Secretary) of the Board of Directors of the Lambton Childrens Safety Village (LCSV) met with Chair Arnold and I to discuss the potential to locate the LCSV at LC Henderson CA in early August
- The mission of the LCSV Board is to help to reduce child-related injuries in the communities of Lambton by creating a safe setting where young people will learn Safety Awareness and will be motivated to learn how to make smart choices in their daily lives
- The LCSV Board has been actively looking for a location to locate the Safety Village for some time and with Chatham-Kent and London & Area Children’s Safety Villages being located on Conservation Authority properties (Chatham-Kent located at CM Wilson CA of Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority and London & Areas located at Fanshawe Conservation Area of Upper Thames River Conservation Authority) it was only natural for the St. Clair Region CA to be investigated for potential sites for the proposed Village

- LC Henderson CA was seen as the most advantageous site due to its location and the potential to coordinate, cooperate and compliment our existing Education Programs
- Prior to the meeting, staff reviewed the potential for locating the Village at LC Henderson CA and 3 specific issues were brought forward and were shared at the August meeting
 - Hydro – we have previously been advised by Hydro One that in order to provide additional Hydro servicing to the site, an additional line from Petrolia will have to be installed and their service will be restricted to the property boundary with the Authority having to purchase the hydro service on Authority property – based on the conceptual plan we propose to obtain two professional opinions – one from an electrician confirming that the proposed development can or cannot be undertaking with the existing system and two from Hydro One to provide confirmation that this is still the case and to prepare a quote for the cost to implement the necessary changes
 - Septic System – the existing septic system is at it's maximum capacity with the existing development on site – the most significant issue is whether the Village will increase the intensity of use beyond the capacity of the system – will combined use of campers, existing education program and the proposed Village be too much for the system to handle – if so what would the cost be to expand or replace the system – proposal should be reviewed by a qualified engineer
 - Impacts on Campers – Camping revenues are the sole source of income for the operation of the Conservation Area and those revenues also support the works completed at other day use Conservation Areas – as a result any negative impact on Campers is an issue – additional structures are not seen as an issue but the increased intensity of use and the proximity of the village to campsites are concerns
- The conceptual design for the Village had a footprint of more than 2 acres including structures, education areas, parking, etc.
- However, after looking at the existing facilities, and reviewing options for complimentary development, the concept for the design of the Village is seperated into 3 distinct locations

- An addition to the existing Education Centre would provide office space for Safety Village and Authority staff, as well as a classroom and kitchen as well as some renovations to the existing Centre
- The Visitors Centre would be duplicated to create additional education area and special event space
- The Safety Village would be smaller than normal with a limited footprint adjacency the parking with required storage included while maintaining as many trees as possible as and maintaining a significant buffer to the adjacent campsites
- The overall concept appears to be a win-win for both organizations, however, it will be important to understand the responses to the outlined issues
- Therefore staff recommend that opinions be sought with regards to the hydro servicing and septic system at LC Henderson CA to ensure that the suitable services exist in order further the investigation process

**Westgate-Rupke
BD-17-106**

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated September 11, 2017, regarding the potential for the incorporation of the Lambton Children’s Safety Village into the LC Henderson CA and further directs staff to obtain required assessments, opinions and quotations to ensure that the existing facilities can accommodate the proposed works and to ensure that any impacts on the Conservation Area, campground and campground activities or the Conservation Education program can and will be successfully mitigated.”

CARRIED

Much of the province has received significantly higher amounts of precipitation over the summer to the point that all the watersheds are outside the low water levels, other than one watershed in the low water level 1. The calculation of drought conditions is statistically analyzed based on actual precipitation compared to average for the month as well as watershed flows compared to lowest average flows at select gauging stations. Within the SCRCA region precipitation has been close or slightly higher than expected averages although have often occur in a pattern of periods of significant rainfall followed by dry periods.

Flood Threat:

With current weather patterns causing extensive sudden rainfall the potential for localized flood conditions may be experienced during these events. While seasonal flows remain in the average range, we continue to monitor changes in watershed conditions as they occur. As always we will continue monitor flows and any significant storm events. Advisories will be provided as conditions dictate.

Weather Forecast (Data: Weather Network, Environment Canada, OFA)

Short Term Outlook

- Seasonal temperature and precipitation across the region over the next 14 days

Long Term Outlook

- Environment Canada anticipates that temperatures will be above average and precipitation will be below normal for the fall season.

Great Lakes Levels (Canadian Hydrometric Service data – July)

The monthly comparison for July 2017 (current available data) indicate that Lake Huron levels have increased by 15cm over July 2016 and continue to remain above the average (period of record) for Lake Huron at 57cm and Lake St. Clair 69cm.

Faas-Miller

BD-17-107

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated September 5, 2017, on the current watershed conditions, flood risk and Great Lakes water levels.”

CARRIED

Aamjiwnaang Shoreline Naturalization:

The purpose of this undertaking is to develop concepts that would “soften” and naturalize the shoreline. This project will also include shoreline work that will improve shoreline access, enhance aquatic habitat and provide general improvements to the existing shore along the entire project site.

Project Highlights:

- habitat pod
- finger groynes
- all permits have been obtained
- construction work has started first week of September
- work is expected to be completed by end of September

Courtright Shoreline Protection:

The site is located in the St. Clair Township along the east shore of the St. Clair River in the community of Courtright. The existing site is protected with concrete rubble and stone and extends approximately 400 meters along the St. Clair River shoreline. A number of sections along the exposed shore have failed. The purpose of the undertaking is to provide shore stabilization, improve shoreline access, enhance aquatic habitat and to provide general improvements to the existing shore along the entire project site.

The proposed preferred shoreline protection structure, include armour stone/rip rap revetment with aquatic planting and gravel beds incorporated along parts of the shoreline.

Draft Design:

- staff reviewing design with the township and consulting engineer
- applications for permits have been completed
- construction work is expected to start this Winter (December, 2017)
- habitat/fish monitoring is underway

Scholten-Bruinink

BD-17-108

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated September 5, 2017 on the ongoing shoreline restoration projects across the watershed.”

CARRIED

National Disaster Mitigation Program:

The National Disaster Mitigation Program (NDMP) was established by the Government of Canada to address the increasing dangers and costs faced by Canadian Communities as a result of flood events. The program will receive \$200 million in funding over the course of five years to improve knowledge regarding flood risks and enhance current flood response programs. These improvements will help protect property and public safety by ensuring more efficient mitigation efforts and recovery procedures following flood events.

Issues/Analysis:

In Ontario, conservation authorities have been delegated the primary responsibility for risk assessments and flood plain mapping from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. In the 1970's and 1980's floodplain mapping commenced under the, Flood Damage Reduction Program (FDRP). Since that time, there has been no federal or provincial investment towards flood plain analysis.

The existing floodplain mapping of SCRCA is based on older Digital Elevation Models with coarse contour intervals of 5 meters. Floodplain elevation discrepancies are often noticed during review process, often 1 – 2 meters or more. Through the SWOOP program, our office has acquired accurate imagery (2010) that can be used to create an extremely detailed DEM with greater accuracy. A flood study using this DEM will deliver accurate floodplain mapping for the watershed.

Staff at SCRCA propose to apply for funding to complete an updated floodplain mapping study for the watershed. However, considering the resources and funding limitations, the practical approach is to consider a pilot study to be conducted over the next 2 years

(2018 and 2019) focussing on 2 regions in the watershed. Staff have identified a rural watershed (Enniskillen) and an urban (Sarnia) watershed to conduct this mapping exercise.

Finance:

The total cost of this project is estimated to be \$200,000. If approved for NDMP funding, 50% of the costs have to be matched by the Municipality, of which 15% is the in-kind contribution such as labour, use of facilities and equipment, which can be readily absorbed by SCRCA. The SCRCA is seeking the remainder (\$70,000) from the Municipalities. Staff will continue to look into other funding sources to provide matching funds for this project.

Staff are in the process of finalizing all supporting documentation for this application.

Scholten-McMillan

BD-17-109

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated September 5, 2017, on the application to National Disaster Mitigation Program to update flood plain mapping as a pilot project in 2 municipalities (City of Sarnia (urban environment) and Township of Enniskillen (rural environment) and further that the Board approves the submission of the application and directs staff to work with the municipalities to obtain the required matching funding.”

CARRIED

St. Clair Conservation recently partnered with the Lambton Water Centre at Lambton College in Sarnia for an innovative project that will modernize flood forecasting in the watershed. The project, comprised of three components, is anticipated to be operational in early 2018.

Project Highlights:

- Remote monitoring camera installed near the confluence of the Sydenham River in Wallaceburg
 - The camera will provide staff the ability to instantaneously watch flood and ice conditions at the watershed’s most vulnerable location while at the office
- Mobile water level logger
 - The logger will be mobile and allow staff to pick up and move anywhere within the watershed
 - Water level data will be collected for streams which are not near a stream gauge and do not have up-to-date water level data
- Mobile precipitation gauge
 - The precipitation gauge will also be mobile and will collect data in areas of the watershed not currently covered by meteorological equipment

- This will allow staff to monitor the movement of precipitation through the watershed and determine changes in patterns attributed to climate change

Financial Contributions:

- St. Clair Conservation is contributing \$8000 the first year for the purchase of equipment, from within the current budget
- an additional \$8000 for the following year for any necessary equipment maintenance or upgrades as budgeted
- St. Clair Conservation will also be providing \$20,100 dollars in in-kind services for the project
- Through the partnership with Lambton Water Centre, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) will be contributing \$26,280 to the project
- Total project cost is \$62,380

Gordon-Scholten

BD-17-110

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated August 31, 2017 on the flood innovation project and the partnership with Lambton College.”

CARRIED

The St. Clair Region Conservation Authority is concerned with the increasing number of enclosure proposals as the affected subwatershed can experience a number of negative and cumulative impacts, including:

- increased floodplain area
- downstream flooding
- upstream flooding
- overland erosion
- increased sediment loads
- degraded stream health (i.e. water quality/aquatic species)

Conservation Authorities are involved with drainage matters in the following ways:

- 1) Since 1949, drainage petitions for new drains and improvements to existing drains are circulated to CAs for comment as required under the Drainage Act S. 4 and S. 78 respectively. CAs may request an environmental appraisal for new drainage works. Once an engineer’s report has been drafted for the proposed drainage works, the Drainage Act provides CAs with a right to appeal the proposed project to the Drainage Tribunal.
- 2) As some drains meet the definition of a ‘watercourse’ under Section 28 of the CA Act, CA written permissions (permits) may be required for new drainage works

and drain improvements, maintenance and repair activities, as per the Drainage Act and Conservation Authorities Act Protocol (DART)

SCRCA's current process is not to require written permission under O.R. 171/06 for enclosures taking place under the Drainage Act. The SCRCA provides comments and advice, based on our mandate, to the *Drainage Act* process for new engineer's reports created under section 4 and/or 78 of the *Drainage Act*. Under the *Drainage Act*, the Authority is limited in the reports or studies that it can request in support of the proposed enclosure.

For those enclosures of natural watercourses or private drainage systems when not occurring under the *Drainage Act*, the proposals may require written permission under Regulation 171/06.

If municipal drain enclosures are carried out (with or without a CA Act S.28 permit) and impact regulated areas with respect to the CA's regulatory responsibilities under the CA Act the CA could be held liable for not undertaking or enforcing its regulatory responsibilities (flooding and erosion impacts).

Ontario Regulation 171/06 gives SCRCA the right to require written permission for enclosures of open municipal drains since it involves alterations to a watercourse. Drains are defined as watercourses under the Act. Requiring written permission for all drain enclosures would enable the SCRCA to seek information, as deemed appropriate, to reduce the impacts of flooding and erosion. The Authority would be seeking such information as part of an application under O.R. 171/06 and not as part of the *Drainage Act* drain review process.

Supplemental to report, interim guidelines have been developed to be in place until policy for Inference to Watercourses is developed for SCRCA.

Administration of service:

- Similar to the DART protocol review process approved by the Board April 18, 2014, Biology Section staff complete the drain enclosure review and reporting with ratification by Planning and Regulations Section/ Regulations Officer. (This administrative process was a natural transition as a result of the former Department of Fisheries and Oceans agreements). As with the DART protocol, SCRCA Ontario Regulation 171/06 "Development, Interference with Wetlands & Alterations to Shorelines & Watercourses" applies to municipal drain enclosures and a proposed Drain Enclosure Policy and guideline would be followed for streamlining purposes. The impacts to flooding and erosion studies, if required, would require review by the SCRCA Engineer. Appropriate peer review fees would apply in these cases. From experience we anticipate only a couple of reports per year.

Financial Implications:

Fees will be recuperated based on current SCRCA Regulation Fee's.

Conservation Strategy:

Refer to appropriate Conservation Strategy

Supports Goals 1, 2 and 3 of Strategic Plan

Other Conservation Authorities:

- Currently the ABCA, LTVCA, ERCA, UTRCA, require written permission (or permits) for drain enclosures.

Miller-Rupke

BD-17-111

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges this report dated August 30, 2017, on the need for O. Regulation 171/06 written permission for drain enclosures and supplemental guidelines and directs SCRCA staff to require O. Regulation 171/06 permission for Drain Enclosures and further that fees be recuperated based on current SCRCA Regulation Fees.”

CARRIED

Lake Erie Conservation Authorities Stewardship Meeting – June 15

Through our OMAFRA funding, we are to work in partnership with other Lake Erie CAs (Essex, Lower Thames, Upper Thames, and Kettle) to promote voluntary adoption of BMPs to reduce nutrient loss and improve soil health with the over-arching goal of reducing phosphorus in Lake Erie.

Soil Health Workshop – July 26

In partnership with the Compost Council of Canada, St. Clair Conservation hosted a hands-on soil health workshop for local farmers. Topics included soil food web, requirements of healthy soil ecosystems and functions, and soil health principles. Participants were asked to bring in soil from their fields to examine under microscope to see if any micro-organisms could be seen. Hands-on exercises included identifying soil organisms, using a penetrometer, slake tests, and soil infiltration tests.

Lambton Soil & Crop Improvement Association Twilight Tour – August 9

Almost 200 people attended Lambton Soil and Crop Improvement Association's twilight tour. OMAFRA's Christine Brown, Field Crops Sustainability Specialist, talked about seven different organic amendment products and the importance of calibration procedures. Five different manure spreaders with vertical beaters were onsite for demonstration. Jake Kraayenbrink demonstrated and discussed the uses of a tire deflation kit with heavy farm machinery to reduce soil compaction, which compromises soil health. SCRCA Agriculture Outreach staff had a display and talked with farmers interested in undertaking projects.

MOECC Outreach Tour – August 15

Staff highlighted a newly created wetland and shared information regarding the Healthy Watersheds Program on the MOECC Outreach Tour.

Ipperwash Beach Day – August 11

St. Clair Conservation staff joined the Ipperwash Phrag Phighters (IPP) and a team of 38 volunteers on their “Phrag Spading Day” the goal was to “spade” and remove invasive *Phragmites australis* from Ipperwash Beach. The team spent 6-hours removing invasive *Phragmites* and White sweet clover from the dunes along a 2.7km stretch of beach.

Middlesex Soil & Crop Improvement Association Twilight Tour – August 22

Staff had a booth at this event and had the opportunity to share with attendees grants available and extend an invitation for the Rotational Grazing & Pasture Tour.

Rotational Grazing & Pasture Tour – August 24

SCRCA, Lambton Soil and Crop Improvement Association, and Lambton Cattlemen’s Association organized a twilight pasture tour to discuss rotational and alternative cattle grazing systems with local farmers. The event had an excellent turnout; about 100 farmers were in attendance. The tour was hosted at Tim and Tina Lehrbass’ farm in Alvinston. The feature speaker, Doug Wray, an Alberta rancher, grazes his cattle 365 days a year and has received many leadership awards from grassland and forage associations. Jack Kyle, former Provincial Grazing Specialist and Tim Prior, Brussels Agri Services lead the pasture walk.

Dunes & Gardens Coastal Stewardship Workshop – August 28

This event was co-hosted with Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority in Port Franks. Nearly 40 people attended the event that focused on protecting dunes and improving soil health in rural gardens. Don Lobb, P. Ag. (Hon), Director-At-Large of the Soil Conservation Council of Canada spoke of the importance of applying lessons from nature in the farm field and the home garden to maintain healthy productive soil. Healthy garden plants require healthy soil. Hannah Cann, Coastal Stewardship Coordinator of Lake Huron Coastal Centre for Conservation, shared dune conservation practices that lakeshore residents could implement on their own to protect and preserve the Lake Huron shoreline.

New Agriculture Outreach Materials and Displays These newsletters and factsheets will help us communicate with landowners in our watershed regarding healthy soils, healthy water quality, and ensuring the best outcome of implemented stewardship projects

We have new displays to highlight at our events!

Staff attended these events for training and outreach as well:

June 8 – Compost Council of Canada Soil Health Workshop

June 29 – Ducks Unlimited Wetlands Workshop
July 6 – St Clair Soil & Crop Improvement Association Executive Outreach Tour
July 11 – Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Strip Tillage Demo Site Tour
July 27 – 4R Nutrient Stewardship Tour
August 22-23 – Soil Conservation Council of Canada Soil Summit

Upcoming Events:

September 9 – Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup – Centre Ipperwash Beach
September 15 – The Dirt on Phosphorus (staff attending)
September 15 – Lambton Shores Ag in the Classroom
September 16 – Strathroy #TDTreeDays at Victoria Park and Cuddy Sports Complex
September 22-24 – Forest Fall Fair (staff to have booth)
September 27 – Interseeding & Cover Crop Demonstration at Lambton Shores
Champion Farm
October 21 – Sarnia #TDTreeDays at Howard Watson Trail
December – GLASI workshop – speaker to be determined

February 2018 Conference

The SCRCA's Soil Health Conference is scheduled for February 15, 2018 in Chatham, ON. There will be presentations from international researchers and Certified Crop Advisors (CCAs), as well as farmer panel discussions. Farmer panel discussions will be on various tillage methods that reduce soil loss, cover crops, 4R nutrient stewardship, alternative grazing and stewardship on big acres.

Rupke-Bruzewicz

BD-17-112

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the status report dated September 1, 2017, regarding the Healthy Watershed Program Workshop Update, including an OMAFRA Soil Health Workshop, GLASI Pasture Tour, and other upcoming events.”

CARRIED

Presentation given by Laura Biancolin, Agricultural Outreach Technician regarding Healthy Soils, Healthy Drains, Healthy Lakes.

Walk the Watershed 2017:

This year's Walk the Watershed (WTW) focused on the Sloan Russell drain and the Shawana Drain. Agriculture Outreach staff contacted eleven landowners, owning 26 properties. For the most part landowners were open to letting staff walk the drains on their properties. A couple landowners were curious about what services SCRCA provided and were interested in seeing a final report and recommendations for their property. Overall the buffer quality was good along the Sloan Russel and Shawana Drain. The buffer

ranged from 2 m to 8 m, nonetheless there were some erosion-prone areas where the buffer was small and mostly weeds. Despite the fields being worked in preparation for planting, a couple of the areas prone to gulying were still visible. Landowners with erosion prone areas were interested in erosion control structures. At these locations, the installation of a grassed waterway or a low-level berm would be a great solution.

GIS Procedure for Locating Agricultural BMPs

SCRCA staff generated maps of the Stream Power Index (SPI, purple), and Total Wetted Index (TWI, orange). Maps were brought along on site visits and shared with landowners. Both models worked well, SPI depicted erosion potential and TWI predicted the location of surface saturated areas. After consulting with landowners it was determined that models were standardized to a level that proved too conservative to predict the full extent of erosion and saturated areas within this target sub-watershed. This project was the first rendition of verifying the model outputs in the field. It is expected that ongoing discussion among landowners and GIS staff will continue till the model outputs fully identify the erosion potential within this target watershed.

Nemcek-McMillan

BD-17-113

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the status report dated August 31, 2017, regarding the Healthy Watershed Program - Walk the Watershed, including an update on the Walk the Watershed Program and GIS procedure for locating agricultural BMPs.”

CARRIED

Turtles:

The Sydenham River Corridor within the East Branch of the Sydenham River contains one of the last remaining [inland] connected green corridors in Southwestern Ontario”. This imperiled and vulnerable habitat provides refuge for the Eastern Spiny Softshell turtle, a species that was been up listed to Endangered in 2016.

The Spiny Softshell Turtle is an olive coloured flat turtle often referred to as the “pancake turtle”. The leathery carapace of the spiny softshell makes it vulnerable to predators. For this reason it is very shy and skittish. These turtles can get almost half the oxygen they require by breathing through their skin while in water, which allows them to hide under water for up to five hours. They are capable of staying under water voluntarily for 20-50 minutes. They can withstand forced submergence in oxygenated water for more than 100 days in experimental conditions. Most anoxia tolerant species in all of North America.

The primary threats are

- habitat and population fragmentation by infrastructure,
- alteration of the water regime (flooding of nests) by dams and changing weather

- patterns,
- increased recreational and agricultural use of nesting areas and adjacent aquatic habitats by humans (disturbance during nesting,
 - ATV use, horseback riding, watercraft use),
 - invasion of nesting areas by non-native plants (e.g., European Common Reed (*Phragmites a. australis*)),
 - high populations of mammalian egg predators and egg poachers,
 - injury and mortality from fishing and motor boating (collisions, propellers), and illegal capture of juveniles and adults.
 - Cyanobacterial blooms (e.g., toxin bioaccumulation, impact on prey) may also impact the species.

Habitat loss is a major contributor to the decline of this species. In the Sydenham, individuals may move up to 30 kilometres between nesting and hibernation sites, and daily movements exceeding 4 kilometres have been observed. This movement is believed to be linked to the lack of critical habitat features. Female softshells prefer to lay eggs in sandy, sunlit areas, which appear to be in limited supply on the Sydenham.

With funding from the Ministry of Natural Resources, Species at Risk Stewardship Fund, St. Clair Region Conservation Authority's recovery efforts focus on the Spiny Softshell turtle as part of our Reptiles at Risk Program. This year a significant achievement was accomplished: the collection, incubation, and release of Spiny Softshell turtles (*Apalone spinifera*) from and into the Sydenham.

Eggs that were in immediate danger were collected as soon as possible after being laid (within 24 hours in order to decrease the chances disturbance) and transported to be incubated with assistance of Salthaven Wildlife & Education Centre. Once hatched the turtles were kept for monitoring to ensure that no difficulties were being had by the newly born hatchlings before being promptly returned to us. Release of the turtles took place in a slow-water, sheltered area near the original nesting site.

So far, in 2017, 388 turtles have been released with 178 Spiny Softshells and 210 Northern Map turtles. More eggs have yet to hatch and will be released in coming days. This is up from 2016, our most successful year to date, in which 76 Spiny Softshells and 35 Northern Map turtles, were incubated and released.

Snakes:

In addition to the turtle program we have also continued our snake monitoring and rehabilitation initiatives with focus on the recovery of the Eastern Foxsnake.

The Eastern Foxsnake, endangered, is the second largest snake found in Ontario. Can

reach a length of up to 1.7 metres. They have a distinct reddish head and a yellowish to light brown body with dark brown blotches running down the back and alternating blotches on either side. When threatened, the eastern foxsnake vibrates its tail and, especially when it comes into contact with dry vegetation, makes a buzzing or “rattling” sound. This behaviour, combined with the snake’s blotchy patterning, causes many people to mistake it for a rattlesnake and has led to the inappropriate name “hardwood rattler.”

Eastern Foxsnakes have a very restricted global distribution, with about 70 percent of their entire range occurring in Ontario, Canada, where population abundance continues to decline. Causes of the species decline include wetland drainage for agriculture, impacts resulting from housing and cottage development, road mortality, human persecution and collection for the pet trade.

In order to help facilitate the recovery of this species, SCRCA’s Reptile at Risk program focuses on:

Artificial Nesting Boxes:

Nesting boxes for Eastern Foxsnake are provided to landowner stewards. These structures help to protect eggs from predators. For the 3rd consecutive year SCRCA has documented hatchling success in these artificial structures.

Coverboard and Road Mortality Monitoring:

Coverboards are sheets of plywood laid on the ground in order to provide protection and an insulated heat source for snakes, attracting them to the underside of the board. Monitoring is completed by quickly flipping the coverboard to reveal any snakes hidden underneath, identifying them to species, and getting an estimate on their length. All of these values as well as location, time of day, weather, and a variety of others are recorded and shared with Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry for long-term monitoring.

Reptile Program Education and Outreach:

Past

- Turtle Birthday Party at AW Campball CA, August 25: About 50 participants learned out SCRCA’s Reptile at Risk Program. A short presentation was followed by a number of activities and refreshments.
- Lambton Wildlife Field Trips, Junior Nats Program, June 30 and July 18: Participants helped with reptile stewardship by assisting with turtle and snake monitoring.
- June 2017 Species at Risk Newsletter, mailed to 65,000 residents.

Upcoming

- Perch Creek Reptile Day with Great Lakes Secondary School, September 26
- Hillside SAR Reptile Education day, October 18
- Lambton Wildlife Talk, November 27

Scholten-Bruziewicz

BD-17-114

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated August 31, 2017, on the Reptiles at Risk Program Update, including highlights of recent collection, incubation and release of Spiny Softshell turtles and snake monitoring.”

CARRIED

Background:

In 2016, a metal corrugated barrier that spanned the full width of Bear Creek at the Bickford Line crossing was removed. The project included completing a mussel relocation protocol, fish exclusion, removal of the barrier, and creating a rock riffle type structure with a low flow passage at the site of the barrier. The 2016 project was funded through Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnership Program (RFCPP) MNRF, HSP Prevention, and Friends of the St. Clair River (using Ontario Trillium Foundation funding).

2016 Barrier Removal on Bear Creek at Bickford Line

Proposed Low Grade Crossing Removal at Moore Wildlife Management Area:

Continuing St. Clair Conservation’s effort to improve fish habitat in this section of Bear Creek, it is proposed that the existing low level crossing also be removed. This crossing is about 600m upstream of the barrier at Bickford Line that was removed in 2016.

Removing the crossing will restrict foot access to the trail on the north side of the property. It is proposed that the existing trail on the south side of the property would be extended to loop back to the parking lot, to continue to provide a recreational use option. Historically, the crossing provided access to the agricultural property on the north side of the river.

This project fits with the objectives outlined in *St. Clair Region Conservation Authority’s Operating Plan for Forested Properties for the period of 2013-2023* which states “The primary objective for these properties is environmental protection and the provision of wildlife habitat.”

Grant funding will be sought to complete the proposed project.

McMillan-Gordon

BD-17-115

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated September 5, 2017 regarding the projects to remove low water crossing at Moore Wildlife Management Area and further approves staff to apply for funding for this proposed potential work.”

CARRIED

Aquatic Monitoring and Reporting:

Fish Monitoring (Supported by Ontario Trillium Foundation and Fisheries and Oceans Canada) - To date in 2017, biology staff have performed fish sampling at ten sites in the St. Clair River Area of Concern (AOC) and five municipal drain sites. Fish sampling in the AOC is supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Funding to sample unrated municipal drains comes from Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Fish community data collected from unrated drains allows DFO to provide a class rating to the drain. Municipalities can perform works on the drain without the lengthy delays associated with site-specific reviews for unrated drains. SCRCA also had staff join DFO for 2 days of fish sampling at the Sydenham Nature Reserve.

Our biologists caught over 50 fish species totaling almost 6000 fish in 2017. Fish Species at Risk (SAR) including the Blackstripe Topminnow and Spotted Sucker (pictured below) were found at six of the fifteen sampling sites.

Mussel Monitoring (Supported by Ontario Trillium Foundation and Habitat Stewardship Program) – By completing mussel surveys on the north branch of the Sydenham River we will gain a better understanding of the distribution of SAR mussels in this system. The north branch currently has less data than the East branch making it difficult to determine optimal locations to complete habitat stewardship projects. In 2017, 4.5hr intensive timed searches were completed at 28 sites on the North Branch of the Sydenham. Half were on Black Creek and half were on Bear Creek. In addition, a 1yr follow-up survival assessment was completed on Bear Creek at the site of last year’s barrier removal project. This season we have captured and processed 5282 live mussels and 3040 dead (shell only). Twenty-one species were observed including five Species at Risk (Round Pigtoe, Salamander, Mapleleaf, Lilliput, and Rainbow).

Wetland Evaluations – The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry evaluates wetlands to help municipalities, conservation authorities and others with land use planning. The wetland evaluation process defines, identifies and measures wetland functions and values. Wetlands are assessed based on their perceived values in maintaining natural processes (ecosystem values). They are also assessed on the benefits provided to society (human utility values).

SCRCA biology staff continue to conduct wetland evaluations within the watershed on behalf of the OMNRF. Fieldwork is nearing completion for the season. Six wetland complexes will be evaluated in the field and one will be completed as a desktop update only. Of the seven wetland complexes, five are updates and two are new evaluations.

Watershed Report Cards - Watershed report cards production is underway. A multi-departmental committee is pulling together data, maps, and write-up relating to groundwater, surface water, forest conditions. Release is scheduled for 2018.

St. Clair River AOC Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Plan - A Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Plan for the St. Clair River Area of Concern (AOC) is scheduled for completion in December 2017. This report is required for the eventual delisting of the AOC. The draft plan summarizes the current status of aquatic habitat, highlights successful coastal wetland projects, identifies linkages to broader initiatives, identify tools for future aquatic conservation, and identifies next steps for aquatic conservation in the St. Clair River AOC.

Community Engagement:

Bioblitzes – Two bioblitzes were conducted at SCRCA campgrounds with the support of TD Friends of the Environment. Members of the community were invited to participate in aquatic surveys to establish species lists for fish, mussels, and benthic macro-invertebrates. The two events took place July 21st at Warwick CA and July 28th at A.W. Campbell CA. After volunteers were put to work, staff invited them to join in snacks and refreshments.

Upcoming Events – September 17 at Ontario Nature's Sydenham Nature Reserve, SCRCA staff will provide a freshwater mussel demonstration for members of the Sydenham Field Naturalists and Lambton Wildlife. This is in support of our continued partnership with Ontario Nature.

September 27 - Staff will provide a benthic macro-invertebrate demonstration at an agricultural focused cover crop event.

November 8-9 – Staff will participate in the 2nd Biennial Canadian Freshwater Mollusc Research Meeting in Burlington Ontario. Topics will include status and distribution, life history, genetics, species at risk, threats, outreach, and more.

Bruinink-Scholten

BD-17-116

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated August 31 2017 regarding Water Quality Monitoring, Watershed Reporting, and Related Community Engagement.”

CARRIED

The 2018 Draft fees for natural heritage planning advisory commenting services to municipalities were reviewed.

Broad-Scholten

BD-17-117

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated September 21, 2017 regarding natural heritage planning advisory commenting services provided to member municipalities and further that the 2018 draft fees be adjusted to ensure cost recovery of the program.”

CARRIED

- staff treated approximately 16,500 catch basins in Sarnia and Lambton towns and villages this summer.
- four staff working from the Strathroy office and 2 staff from the Darcy McKeough Dam treated 1,500 catch basins with a single season long methoprene briquette and approximately 15,000 catch basins were treated with 3 separate applications of methoprene pellets at 21 day intervals between June 26th and August 19th.
- post treatment efficacy testing was conducted in the last week of August, approximately 20 days after the third and final round of catch basins treated with pellets and approximately 60 days after the catch basins that were treated with season long briquettes. Results showed very good control for the pellets and mixed results for the season long treated catch basins. Testing results were sent to the Lambton Public Health.
- two permits for the mosquito control works were issued by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change in June. A report to the Ministry is required before December 1st, 2017
 1. Sarnia-Lambton – 16,500 methoprene pellets and briquettes
 2. Sarnia-Lambton – Bti for wetlands and emergency situations

Aamjiwnaang First Nation was also treated with methoprene pellets. A pesticide permit was not required under M.O.E.C.C for treatment of these catch basins.

McMillan-Miller

BD-17-118

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the status report dated September 11, 20167, regarding West Nile Virus – Lambton County Mosquito Control Program.”

CARRIED

Large Stock Tree Program:

- the large stock tree program has been part of the SCRCA tree planting program since the 1980's and was created to make inexpensive trees available to the counties and municipalities for local planting projects as well as for rural landowners wishing to plant smaller areas but with larger trees.
- these larger trees are used mainly for memorial forest tree planting, street tree planting and shelterbelt planting programs and have now attracted certain industries in Lambton County over the past several years
- native evergreen (coniferous) trees come balled and burlapped and up to 1 meter in height.
- native hardwood (deciduous) trees come in either bare root or potted containers and range between 1 m and 2.5 m in height
- prices range between \$10 and \$40 per tree based on species, size and container type
- 800 large stock trees were ordered and planted this year by municipalities and landowners
- Shell Canada Inc., St. Clair Township is our most recent industrial corporation taking part in our large tree program
- for 2 weeks in both June and July, conservation services planted 125 very large (caliper stock) trees on Shell property along the St. Clair Parkway. More trees to following in October.
- larger stock tree planting at Warwick Landfill (Twin Creeks) screening berms will also take place in October, mostly as refilling some of the trees that have died.

due to recent difficulties in obtaining desired stock we have changed the order deadline to December 15th 2017 for spring 2018 tree orders. All municipalities are encouraged to participate in the program in 2018

Scholten-Rupke

BD-17-119

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the status report dated September 11, 2017, regarding the Authority’s large stock tree programs and opportunities for municipal involvement.”

CARRIED

Tree Planting Program:

- Landowner site visits for 2018 tree planting program to start this month along with vegetation control retreatment for landowners under the 3 year program.
- all projects that meet specific program criteria are planned for project review in November for grant approval under one or more of the funding programs that SCRCA has available for financial incentive for 2017-2018 grant year including MNRF species at risk funds, Sydenham Habitat Stewardship, 50 Million Tree Program and the Essex - Kent - Lambton OPG fund.
- Approximately \$120,000 in grants available so far, through multiple tree planting and stewardship programs.
- All of this funding is used as financial incentive and is provided to the landowner to cover more than 50% of the project costs.
- Survival assessments were completed in July for a portion of 2017, 2016, 2015 and 2011 planting projects.
- Tree survival counts showing over 90% success rate.
- Survival rates are only attainable at this level with landowner involvement combined with our 3-year herbicide application program.

Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP):

- Two new managed forest tax plans were written and approved for 2018 tax year for 2 private landowners
- Four managed forest tax plan renewals for 4 Authority properties and one renewal for 1 foundation property were completed in July for the 2018 to 2027 tax schedule
- We have one forest management plan approver on staff certified to write and approve forest management plans for tax purposes
- Approved plans are send to MNRF and then updated information is sent to MPAC
- MPAC adjusts property taxes on the forested portion of the property equal to farm tax rates.

Vegetation Management Program:

- Approximately 250,000 trees require herbicide treatment this fall
- Fall herbicide application for vegetation control on 2014 to 2017 tree planting sites are scheduled to start in the 2nd week of September will continue into November after the deciduous seedlings go into dormancy and drop their leaves and ends after the first heavy frost.

Seed Collection Program:

- This year's tree seed collection will start the first week of October.

- Enbridge has provided SCRCA conservation services department with a significant donation towards a tree seed collection mentoring/training course (early October) to train local, interested individuals how to forecast, collect, clean and store tree seed. People will earn money doing it as well and provide this area with a much needed service.
- Currently there are no collectors in this area. Without people collecting tree seed to ship to the tree growers/nurseries there will not be any genetically suitable trees available for us purchase trees for the future.
- The province as also recently announced that they will be closing the Angus tree seed plant. It is one of the last remaining provincially run operations.
- Review of article by Roger Klein, CTV News Barrie on August 28, 2017 regarding the Province closing Angus Seed Plant

Bruzewicz-Nemcek

BD-17-120

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the status report dated September 11, 2017, regarding conservation services programs across the watershed including approved funding from Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests Species at Risk Program, spring tree planting survival & maintenance and other vegetation control programs.”

CARRIED

The fundamental provincial role for all CAs is to focus on water related natural hazard prevention and management. To accomplish this, one of our legislative mandated activity is the CA Regulatory Authority under Section 28 of the CA Act. SCRCA's Regulatory Authority stems from Ontario Regulation 171/06 "Development, Interference with Wetlands & Alterations to Shorelines & Watercourses".

In a review of activity numbers, staff are noting an alarming increase in numbers of non-compliance matters in respect to Regulation 171. Below is a chart indicating activity levels.

In a review of the non-compliance activities for 2016 – 2017 to date, the following is noted:

- > 100% increase in activity from 2015 to date.
- 67% of the activities are on the Lake Huron shoreline
- 41% of the activities are on the L. Huron shoreline in Plympton Wyoming
- 25% of the activities involve dune/beach alteration in Ipperwash, Lambton Shores

An increase in non-compliance is partially due to the high lake levels and landowners undertaking works without permission under Regulation 171. The non-compliance matters listed are significant compliance matters and are not easily remedied. We have not counted the matters that are easily solved via the application and permit process.

Scholten-Miller

BD-17-121

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated September 1, 2017 on the activity levels related to the enforcement of St. Clair Region Conservation Authority Ontario Regulation 171 and further that levels continue to be monitored through 2017 for recommended action in 2018.”

CARRIED

A summary of staff activity related to the Conservation Authority’s Development, Interference of Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation (Ontario Regulation 171/06 under Ontario Regulation 97/04) was presented. This report covers the period from June 1, 2017 to August 31, 2017.

Permit Review Timelines are outlined in the document “Policies and Procedures for Conservation Authority Plan Review and Permitting Activities” Final Version May 2010, completed by the Conservation Authority Liaison Committee (CALC). In this document it states;

- CAs are to make a decision (i.e. recommendation to approve or referred to a Hearing) with respect to a permission (permit) application and pursuant to the CA Act within 30 days for a minor application and 90 days for a major application.

Scholten-Rupke

BD-17-122

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges and concurs with the Regulations Activity Report on “Development, Interference with Wetlands & Alterations to Shorelines & Watercourses” Regulations (Ontario Regulation 171/06), dated August 31, 2017.”

CARRIED

- Planning Activity Summary Reports for June, July and August, 2017 were reviewed
- List of Meetings attended was reviewed

Bruzewicz-Nemcek

BD-17-123

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority’s monthly Planning Activity Summary Reports for June, July and August, 2017.”

CARRIED

Presentation by Patty Hayman and Erica Ogden was received.

Recommendations

- 1) That staff be directed to initiate the task of formulating the Planning and Regulations manual.
- 2) The Board of Directors consider appointing a Procedures and Technical Guidelines (Planning and Regulations) Manual Committee for the duration of the project to facilitate the review of the Manual. The Committee would be a sunset committee of the Conservation Authority.

Background

Purpose:

The purpose of the Manual is to provide a comprehensive guidelines and procedures document for SCRCA development and site alteration review, which will take guidance from Provincial Policy, Conservation Ontario policies/procedures and SCRCA’s existing policies. The procedures and technical guidelines manual is a local guidance document of current procedures and practices.

The Manual is a “living document” that will be updated on a periodic basis to reflect procedural issues related to updated technical practices, technical information or legislative changes (ie. Conservation Authorities Act changes). In addition to being used by SCRCA staff, it is envisioned that the reference document can be utilized by member municipalities, landowners/proponents, the development community, and the general public.

Benefits of a Comprehensive Manual:

- Increased *transparency* to the public
- Improved *consistency* for application review
- Further *clarity* on the Authority’s role in the review of development and site alteration
- Improved *efficiency* in staff time
- Serve as a *central* resource of information
- Assist with *successional* planning

Why now?:

Conservation Ontario has provided guidelines for the development of policy and procedural manuals and highly recommends Conservation Authorities ensure comprehensive guidance documents are developed for their watersheds.

For successional purposes at the SCRCA, it will greatly assist new staff in administering the program. The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority, in which the SCRCA shares over half its inland watershed boundary, recently completed public consultation with regard to a comprehensive Regulations and Planning Policy and Procedure Manual 2016. The document is available at LTVCA website <http://www.lowerthames-conservation.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/LOWER-THAMES-VALLEY-CONSERVATION-AUTHORITY-draft-policy-doc-edit.pdf>. To aid in CA consistency, it is appropriate to utilize LTVCA's document template, in moving forward with this initiative. In the last several years, SCRCA staff have been meeting with LTVCA, ERCA, KCCA and UTRCA planning staff to discuss procedure manuals, content of manual sections, and common issues.

Level of Difficulty:

To date, the Board of Directors have approved various policies for the administration of Municipal Plan Review and SCRCA Ontario Regulation 171/06 "Development, Interference with Wetlands & Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses". The Manual will bring together the technical guidance/policies and procedures into one central resource. The works are largely a housekeeping measure.

Consultation:

- Sections of the draft manual and progress will be brought forward to the Board of Directors.
- There are advantages to having a Board of Directors subcommittee or a sunset committee review the sections of the manual as they are completed. It is requested that the Board consider appointing a Planning and Regulations Manual Committee for this purpose with 3-4 meeting per year (held immediately following Board meetings).
- Following completion of draft Planning and Regulations sections, public consultation will be undertaken with feedback brought back to the Board.
- Final approval by the Board of Directors based on the feedback will be sought for the Planning and Regulations Sections of the manual.

Anticipated Timeline:

The anticipated timeline for the completion of the draft Planning and Regulations Manual is 2018; with additional consultation being carried over into 2019.

Draft Table of Contents & Introduction:

Enclosed is a draft Table of Contents outline for the Manual. Support in principle for the Manual is requested of the Board of Directors.

Chapter 1 – Introduction has also been included in draft form. This is good background information.

Financial implications:

No financial implications. To be done in house as time permits but will be given a higher priority.

Conservation Strategy:

This initiative meets Goal 1 and 2 of the 2016 SCRCA Strategic Plan and Mission statement for the SCRCA.

Goal 1 – Develop and maintain programs that will protect life and property from natural hazards such as flooding and erosion

Goal 2 – Protect, manage, and restore our natural systems including woodlands, wetlands, waterways, and lakes

Mission - “The St. Clair Region Conservation Authority has as its mission, to provide leadership through coordination of watershed planning, implementation of resource management programs and promotion of conservation awareness, in cooperation with others.”

Scholten-Faas

BD-17-124

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report on the Planning Department ‘Procedural Manual and Technical Guidelines’, dated August 30, 2017 and further directs staff to initiate this project and further concurs with the draft Table of Contents and Chapter 1 Introduction section, and further the Board appoint a Planning and Regulations Manual Committee with the following members: Steve Arnold, Chair/ Andy Bruziewicz, Vice Chair; Tony Bruinink; Gerry Rupke; Cindy Scholten; Muriel Wright.”

CARRIED

Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) Update

Beach Closings BUI:

The status assessment for the “Beach Closings” BUI for the St. Clair River AOC was presented to the Four Agency Managers Work Group at the June 29, 2017 meeting.

Comments have been received from members of the committee as well as the Walpole Island First Nation Heritage Committee. These comments will be considered in the preparation of the final *Status of the Beach Closings Beneficial Use Impairment* report.

Restrictions on Dredging Activities BUI, Bird or Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems BUI, Beach Closings BUI:

Meetings are being coordinated between Environment and Climate Change Canada and Walpole Island First Nation Council to discuss the re-designation of BUIs: *Restrictions on Dredging Activities, Bird or Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems, and Beach Closings*. Next steps in the re-designation process will be determined upon the completion of these meetings.

2012 – 2017 Accomplishments Report:

The 2012 – 2017 St. Clair River Area of Concern Work Plan concluded in March 2017. The *2012 – 2017 Accomplishments Reports* is currently being developed based on activities completed for the work plan. The Accomplishments Report is scheduled to be finalized in the fall of 2017 and available for public distribution soon after.

Recent and Future Meetings:

Canadian Remedial Action Plan Implementation Committee (CRIC):

- September 20, 2017 – Sarnia, Ontario

Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC):

- July 20, 2017 – Port Huron, Michigan
- September 20, 2017 – Sarnia, Ontario

Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Population Subcommittee:

- October 2017 – location to be determined

Presentations and Events:

Presentations were delivered and/or St. Clair River AOC information was displayed at recent meetings and events including:

- St. Clair Region Conservation Authority Bus Tour – June 22, 2016
- American BUI Removal Celebration Event, Port Huron, Michigan – August 3, 2017
- Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Watershed Tour – August 15, 2016
- Envirofest, Aamjiwnnang First Nation – August 22, 2016

Scholten-Faas

BD-17-125

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated September 7, 2017, on the St. Clair River Area of Concern program.”

CARRIED

The revenue and expenditure report to July 31, 2017, as it relates to the budget was reviewed.

Wright-McMillan

BD-17-126

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the revenue and expenditure report to July 31, 2017, as it relates to the budget.”

CARRIED

The SCRCA Disbursements from June, July and August, 2017 were reviewed.

Bruziewicz-Faas

BD-17-127

“That the Board of Directors approves the June to August 2017 disbursements as presented in the amount of \$1,338,068.84”

CARRIED

The report on 2017 General Levy Receipts to September 1, 2017 was reviewed.

Nemcek-Rupke

BD-17-128

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the status report on the 2017 general levy receipts to September 1 2017.”

CARRIED

The report of the 2018 Preliminary draft budget and proposed municipal levy was reviewed.

Scholten-Bruziewicz

BD-17-129

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the 2018 preliminary draft budget of \$6,940,600 with a proposed municipal general levy of \$823,855 and further that this preliminary budget circulated to member municipalities for information and input based on our budget review process.”

CARRIED

- SCRCA Investment statements for the period ending August 31, 2017 were reviewed

Scholten-Gordon

BD-17-130

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the investment statements for the period ending August 31, 2017.”

CARRIED

Conservation Education:

With the Conservation Education Program about to launch into its season, two promotional flyers were produced highlighting the numerous programs available to students in both elementary and high schools. The flyers were distributed to each teacher in the region highlighting the various programs provided. They have been included in this package.

Conservation Scholarships:

Four scholarships were presented this June by Steve Arnold. The students and parents were all very proud and appreciative.

A.W. Campbell Memorial Scholarships – \$1,000 award:

Monique Benedict, Strathroy and District Collegiate Institute
Emily Fraser, Great Lakes Secondary School

Tony Stranak Conservation Scholarship – \$500 award:

Jillian Ball, Lambton Kent Composite School

Mary Jo Arnold Conservation Scholarship – \$500 award:

Nicole Delmage, North Lambton Secondary School

Aamjiwnaang Envirofest:

SCRCA staff participated in Aamjiwnaang’s Envirofest held on August 22, 2017. Information was shared with community members on a number of Conservation Authority programs including the unique and valuable wildlife found within our watershed and our programs to protect species at risk, critical habitat, and vulnerable ecosystems.

Great Lakes SHSM Student Conference Update:

SCRCA staff worked with Grafiks Marketing & Communications in Sarnia to create a short video on the Great Lakes student conference held this past May. This video was a deliverable for the Ministry of the Environment & Climate Change (MOECC) grant that funded the conference.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uz7PD4NW5N0>

Nature Walk with GO Project Summer Camp:

This August, SCRCA staff organized a morning of educational activities and a nature walk at the Wawanosh Conservation Area for a group of children attending the GO Project summer camp.

MOECC Watershed Tour:

Upon request from the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MOECC), SCRCA staff organized a watershed tour for representatives from the MOECC and a group of their summer students. The tour involved a presentation in the morning explaining Authority programs followed by a car tour where SCRCA staff were able to highlight current projects.

SAR Newsletter Contest Winners:

SCRCA staff received 25 submissions for the Annual Sydenham River Species at Risk Newsletter contest. The winners of the SAR newsletter contest were randomly selected:

1. Kaelyn Mills – First prize: Binoculars and a SCRCA Weekend Camping Pass
2. Dave Zinkie – Second prize: “A Blanding’s Turtle Story” (children’s picture book) and a SCRCA Weekend Camping Pass
3. Harvey McEwan – Third prize: SCRCA Gift Bag

Union Gas Wetland Restoration Donation Event:

Union Gas donated \$12,000 to the SCRCA to support a wetland restoration project on Authority property 97. To officially recognize the donation, staff organized a cheque presentation event that media were invited to attend. Steve Arnold, Authority Chair, accepted the donation from Union Gas on behalf of the SCRCA. Jessica Van Zwol, Healthy Watershed Specialist, and Steve Shaw, Manager of Conservation Services, toured the representatives from Union Gas, the SCRCA, and a member of the media around the site of the newly completed wetland restoration project. The group also went to the nearby site of a mature wetland restoration project on property 56 to see how the new wetland will transform.

Upcoming Events:

Denning’s Memorial Tree Dedication

Keith McLean Conservation Lands, Sunday September 17, 2pm – Greetings will be provided by Steve Arnold, Chair, St. Clair Region Conservation Authority

A Geocaching Adventure

Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area, Sunday September 17, 9am-3pm

St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation Memorial Forest Dedication

Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area, Sunday September 24, 2pm – Speakers: Duncan Skinner, President, St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation; and Steve Arnold, Chair, St. Clair Region Conservation Authority

“Nature Preservation Day” with Andersen Windows
Staff from Strathroy’s Andersen Windows will be volunteering for a Conservation Area clean-up, Thursday September 28, 1-3pm

Chatham-Kent and Lambton Children’s Water Festival
C.M. Wilson Conservation Area, Chatham, October 3-5

**McMillan-Bruziewicz
BD-17-131**

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the Communications Report, dated September 6, 2017, including information regarding Conservation Education, Coming Events and Conservation Scholarships.”

CARRIED

Presentation by Ms. Burbridge in regards to her property at 4606 Lakeside Street was given and copies of related correspondence and list of questions to SCRCA provided.

**McMillan-Wright
BD-17-132**

“That the Board of Directors acknowledge the correspondence to Ms. Burbidge dated July 26, 2017, staff’s verbal introduction and Ms. Burbidge’s presentation and that a full report is prepared by SCRCA staff, including an update from Municipality and a written response is formed to Ms. Burbidge’s questions and recommendations provided.

CARRIED

Under New Business:

- **(RE: BD-17-105)** Summary requested from Kevan Baker, Director of Lands outlining the number of notices issued to unpaid vehicles at Highland Glenn including both paid and outstanding.
- **(RE: BD-17-124)** Subcommittee for the Planning and Regulations Manual to ensure that the development of the document includes consultation with Municipal Planners as well as feedback sought from Development Community.
- Report requested from Girish Sankar, Manager of Water Resources comparing current water levels to previous years up to and including 1985.

Westgate-Bruinink
BD-17-133

“That the meeting be adjourned.”

CARRIED



Steve Arnold
Chair



Brian McDougall
General Manager