



# Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: April 18, 2019

Time: 10:00 am

Administration Office, Strathroy

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**Directors Present:** Joe Faas, Chair; Larry Gordon, Vice Chair; John Brennan, Pat Brown, Andy Bruziewicz, Terry Burrell, Frank Kennes, Brad Loosley, Betty Ann MacKinnon, Kevin Marriott, Mark McGill, Carmen McGregor, Dan McMillan, Steve Miller, Frank Nemcek, Ron Schenk, Mike Stark, Jerry Westgate.

**Regrets:** Alan Broad, Lorie Scott

**Staff Present:** Brian McDougall, General Manager; Erin Carroll, Director of Biology; Dallas Cundick, Manager of Planning and Regulations; Nicole Drumm, Communication Technician; Chris Durand, Manager of GIS and IT; Ashley Fletcher, Administrative Assistant/ Board Coordinator; Tim Payne, Manager of Forestry; Tracy Prince, Director of Finance; Girish Sankar, Director of Water Resources; Steve Shaw, Manager of Conservation Services; Greg Wilcox, Manager of Conservation Areas

**Guests:** John Smith, Fawn Island Residents Group; Grant Inglis, Little, Inglis, Price & Ewer

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was 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-19-35**

**Marriott – MacKinnon**

**“That the Board of Directors adopts the agenda for the meeting as presented.”**

**CARRIED**

2 errors were noted and were amended.

## **BD-19-36**

**Gordon – Burrell**

**“That the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting, held February 28, 2019, be approved as amended.”**

**CARRIED**

## **Modernizing Conservation Authority Operations:**

- On April 4<sup>th</sup>, a webinar confirmed the following postings to the Environmental Registry from the Ministries of Environment, Conservation & Parks and Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry
- The posting were made on April 5<sup>th</sup>
- The Province of Ontario has identified several key issues with CA operations
  - Lack of transparency

- Municipalities concerns regarding costs to fund CAs
  - Lack of direct municipal control over CA budgets
  - The Commission on the Reform on Ontario's Public Services (2012) identified a state of confusion for industry, developers and citizens resulting from "jurisdictional crowding" in agencies and governments – need to eliminate duplication
  - Ontario's Auditor General's special report of Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority made key recommendations to Ontario: clarify board member's accountability, board training and mechanisms for Ministry intervention
- **The Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry is proposing to amend the Conservation Authorities Act to:**
    - Define the core mandatory programs and services offered by CAs: natural hazard protection and management, conservation and management of CA lands and drinking water source protection
    - Increase transparency in how CAs levy municipalities for mandatory and non-mandatory programs and services
    - Update the CA Act to conform with modern transparency standards by ensuring that municipalities and CAs review levies for non core programs after a certain period of time (e.g. 4 to 8 years)
    - Establish a transition period (18-24 months) and process for CAs and municipalities to enter into agreement for the delivery of non-mandatory programs and services and meet the required transparency requirements
    - Enable the Minister to appoint an investigator to investigate or undertake an audit and report on a CA
    - Clarify that the duty of CA Board Members is to act in the best interest of the CA, similar to not-for-profit organizations
- **Focusing on Conservation Authority Development Permits on the Protection of People and Property, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry is also proposing to:**
    - Update definitions to align with the natural hazard management intent of the regulation
    - Clarify restrictions around wetlands that do not help mitigate risks of flooding
    - Exempt low risk development activities from requiring a permit
    - Allow CAs to exempt low-risk development activities from requiring a permit within CA permitting policies
    - Require CAs to develop, consult on, make available and periodically review permitting policies
    - Require CAs to notify the public of changes to regulated areas (e.g. floodplains or wetland boundary expansions)
    - Require CAs to establish, monitor and report on service delivery standards (e.g. timelines for confirm complete applications and permit decisions)

- As stated in the Audited Financial Statements - This reserve has been set aside to assist the Authority's forestry program with certain restrictions for its use
- **Therefore**
  - 45-Day posting of proposed Conservation Authorities Act amendments on the Environmental Registry which was posted on April 5
  - 45-Day posting of proposal on the Regulatory and Environmental Registries to focus CA development permits on the protection of people and property which was also posted on April 5
  - Further plans for the spring & summer 2019 include development and consultation on a suite of regulatory and policy proposals to support the proposed amendments to and proclamation of un-proclaimed provisions of the Conservation Authorities Act
- **Next steps:**
  - Authority staff will be reviewing the posting, seeking additional input and preparing a draft response to the postings
  - As it is important that the Authority respond directly to these postings, our policies require that the response receives Board approval prior to submission
  - A plan to obtain this permission will be discussed at the meeting
  - This report, written 5 days after the report at Item 6.2, will likely require some of the information to be incorporated into both Environmental Registry responses and Conservation Ontario communication to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding the Housing Supply Action Plan

**Notes of Thanks:**

- Two notes of thanks were reviewed, related to the Authority's Annual General Meeting
- Lambton Shores Phragmites Community Group provided their appreciation for being recognized for the Conservation Award
- Tracy Kingston, St. Clair Township Councillor expressed her thanks for the invitation to the meeting

**BD-19-37**

**Marriott – McMillan**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the General Manager’s report, dated April 9, 2019.”**

**CARRIED**

**BD-19-38**

**Nemcek – Westgate**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the verbal report of Conservation Ontario’s Annual General meeting held April 1, 2019 at Black Creek Pioneer Village in Toronto.”**

**CARRIED**

In June of 2018 a new government was elected and moved quickly to implement the *Plan for the People* platform which included promises to:

- “Cut red tape and stifling regulations that are crippling job creation and growth, and
- ...single-window access for approvals with a hard one-year deadline”

Since that time the government has introduced a number of consultations, draft proposals and proposed amendments to legislation in support of their agenda.

### **Made in Ontario Environment Plan**

The Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks released the *Preserving and Protecting our Environment for Future Generations: A Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan (2018)* that affirmed support for conservation and environmental planning and specifically mentioned that they would:

- “work in collaboration with municipalities and stakeholders to ensure that conservation authorities focus and deliver on their core mandate of protecting people and property from flooding and other natural hazards and conserving natural resources”.

### **Housing Supply Action Plan**

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has initiated consultations on a *Housing Supply Action Plan* with the purpose to increase supply and streamline the development approval process. The Ministry is also reviewing the *Planning Act* and the *Provincial Policy Statement* to ensure that the land use planning and development approvals process is aligned with their goal.

### **Concerns About CAs**

Conservation authorities (CAs) in Ontario are part of the planning and development approvals process as we implement our mandate. Concerns have been expressed that conservation authorities “need to stick to their mandate” and that they present a “significant barrier” to timely development approvals. Many of these concerns arise in the Greater Toronto Area where land development is complex, and demands are high, however, it is also very relevant to other areas in the province where development is occurring.

CAs have acknowledged that we can always improve our processes and relationships with the many stakeholders that we interact with. In 2007 Conservation Ontario and CAs participated with the Ontario Home Builders Association (OHBA) and the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) along with municipalities, the province and

other stakeholders as members of the Conservation Authority Liaison Committee (CALC). In 2010, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) and Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) approved the *Policies and Procedures for Conservation Authority Plan Review and Permitting Activities* that would form part of MNRF's Policies and Procedures Manual. Conservation Ontario provided training in 2012 and 2014 to assist CAs in implementing the best practices laid out in this document. Each CA was encouraged to prepare publicly available policies and procedures to ensure transparency and outline expectations to stakeholders including review and permitting timelines and fees. All of St. Clair Region CA's policies, guidelines and mapping are available to our clients and staff work to adhere to the review and permitting timelines as determined through the CALC process.

It is imperative that conservation authorities engage in the conversation about our very important role in land use planning and development approvals as well as helping the new government understand our mandate and the relationships we have with our municipalities.

### **Analysis:**

Conservation Ontario (CO) retained Strategy Corp to provide insights and advice on working with the new government. Through this process a number of General Managers volunteered to establish a small CO working group to work with CO to identify recommendations for solutions that will address the issues identified by the government around the housing supply while still protecting natural hazards management and plan review activities required to protect the health and safety of Ontario's watersheds and residents.

### **Conservation Authority Mandate**

The CO working group discussed clarifying and restating our mandate as supported by the recent update to the *Conservation Authorities Act (2017)* and as described in the province's *Made in Ontario Environment Plan*:

“The core mandate of conservation authorities is to undertake watershed-based programs to protect people and property from flooding and other natural hazards, and to conserve natural resources for economic, social and environmental benefits”.

This has always been the purpose of CAs and now, more than ever, it is necessary to have organizations like this on the ground and being able to work at the right scale to protect and manage natural resources. Our monitoring, identification of issues and appropriate mitigation measures, helps our communities to be able to respond to climate change and increase their resiliency. Further, as the federal and provincial governments restrict their activities more to policy related activities there is a gap in capacity to address local environmental issues.

The following excerpt from a Conservation Ontario briefing note to the province identifies that:

“Conservation authorities are a cost-effective mechanism for the Province and municipalities for the delivery of objectives under the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)

- In addition to acting as a commenting agency on behalf of the Province with regard to natural hazards, conservation authorities also act as regulators. Additionally, conservation authorities act as technical advisors for municipalities in the review of planning applications, and, as source protection authorities under the Clean Water Act supporting policy implementation.
- Conservation authorities ensure that applicants and municipal planning authorities are aware of regulations and requirements as well as assist in the coordination of applications under the Planning Act and the Conservation Authorities Act. The focus is to eliminate unnecessary delay or duplication in the process as it relates to protecting public health and safety from natural hazards, now and into the future.
- Conservation authorities, through the provision of advice from watershed-based science, enable municipalities to cost effectively consider in their decision-making other PPS considerations such as ‘wise use and management of resources’ and stormwater.”

### **Streamlining Conservation Authority Activities**

The CO working group has been evaluating ways that CAs can streamline approval activities and “reduce red tape” in order to help the province address the lack of housing supply. It is recognized that we need to identify the **outcomes** that the province and our municipalities need and review and **modify our processes** to ensure the **best solutions**.

The CO working group developed the following three key solutions that we will work on with the development and construction community and municipalities. Through these activities we will also identify any other specific concerns to be addressed.

#### 1. Improve Client Service and Accountability

- Provide client service training and establish client service standards implementing activities such as one point of contact for applications, and template guidelines for policies, processes, and, CA/Municipal MOUs that have clear deadlines for the different plan review services. (SCRCA has established on point of contact and has increased focus on communication with the applicant)(SCRCA is working with our Board of Directors to develop a Planning Policy Procedural Manual and Technical Guidelines to provide information on deadlines, requirement and processes to ensure that clients have a transparent understanding)
- Our commitment to timely approvals will be reported on annually. (SCRCA provides reporting on time from completed application to approval at each Board meeting)

- Initially, focus efforts on conservation authorities with high growth areas (GGHG/GTA and other parts of the province) where housing supply is needed immediately.
2. Increase speed of approvals
    - Assess current application review/approval timelines, identifying problem areas where timelines are not being met and developing solutions to meet timelines.
    - Establish timelines that match the complexity of development applications (e.g. simple and complete applications can be processed more quickly).
  3. Reduce “red tape” and regulatory burden
    - Examine where conservation authorities can improve or change our processes to speed up or simplify permitting in hazard areas.
    - Explore additional legislative or regulatory amendments to achieve increased housing supply and decreased approval timeframes.

### **Work Underway Among CAs**

Some of these activities have already been started with the CO Section 28 Regulations Committee meeting over the past six months to identify potential streamlining options that can be implemented immediately.

We too experience issues with other regulatory or planning processes that influence our ability to complete our work. We have identified several of these including the opportunity to revisit recent changes to the *Safe Drinking Water Act (O. Reg 205/18)* and streamlining of approvals under the *Endangered Species Act*.

There is always more we can do and St. Clair Region CA is committed to ensuring that we deliver our mandate while working with clients efficiently and effectively. St. Clair Region CA intends to embrace the key actions identified by the CO working group and develop additional actions based on internal discussions.

### **Communications Plan:**

St. Clair Region CA will communicate with our stakeholders any changes to our processes regarding planning and permitting to ensure a smooth transition.

### **Financial Implications:**

Authority programs are intended to be operated on a cost recovery basis. User fees and municipal levies provide revenues to the program and both are established annually by the Board of Directors. As previously presented to the Board of Directors, increases in fees and levy are assisting in bringing revenues up towards expenditures but at this time still appear to be falling short of cost recovery.

### **Conclusion:**

The province is seeking to streamline planning and development approvals to facilitate the housing supply. CAs have a role to play in examining our processes for plan review and permitting and St. Clair Region CA is committed to continuous improvement. This

report outlines three areas for immediate action that we are seeking board endorsement to implement.

**BD-19-39**

**Schenk – Miller**

**“Whereas the provincial government intends to increase the supply of housing and streamline the land use planning and development approval process to achieve this goal; and whereas the Conservation Authorities play an important role in the planning and development review process with respect to watershed protection and hazard lands; and whereas Conservation Authorities support and can help deliver the Government’s objective not to jeopardize public health and safety or the environment; therefore be it resolved that the Board of Directors endorse the three key solutions developed by the Conservation Ontario working group: to improve client service and accountability; increase speed of approvals; and, reduce ‘red tape’ and regulatory burden; and that staff be directed to work with Conservation Ontario and our clients to identify additional improvements; and further that staff be directed to implement these solutions as soon as possible.”**

**CARRIED**

**BD-19-40**

**Burrell – Loosley**

**“That the Board of Directors directs staff to draft correspondence to the Ministry of Natural Resources, carbon copying the local MPP, Conservation Ontario and Ministry of Finance requesting a delay in the implementation of funding cuts to the Conservation Authorities and that the funding remain consistent with the matching Municipal levy for the current fiscal year.”**

**CARRIED**

**Regarding BD-18-149**

- A request was made that Erin Carroll, Manager of Biology, meet with staff from the Municipality of Chatham-Kent to further discuss Species At Risk Legislation in respect the drainage works. The Board of Directors also requests a report outlining their discussion and outcomes. A report will be submitted in 2019.
  - Authority staff have left multiple message with Chatham-Kent staff regarding a meeting to discuss Species At Risk legislation without reply
  - On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Authority staff met with Chatham-Kent municipal drainage superintendents and managers to discuss the Authorities drain enclosure policy and to confirm fees
  - Several points at issue were clarified, while some remain to be clarified
  - A request was made to the Authority Chair and staff that the policy be reviewed in order to provide additional clarity with specific regard to enclosures on pumped drains and drains with near zero fall
  - Correspondence is being drafted to Chatham-Kent to confirm the justification behind fees
  - Authority staff are proposing to undertake a discussion on the policy and to draft an accompanying document that will provide further clarity with



regards to the policy and that this document and the review be brought to the Board of Directors as a report at the September meeting (especially in light of the Environmental Registry posting described in 5.1)

### **Regarding BD-18-198**

- A request was made for a report on parking fees at Highland Glen
  - A report was included within the agenda

### **BD-19-41**

#### **Miller – Marriott**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the updates on business arising from the February 28, 2019 meeting.”**

#### **CARRIED**

- The Conservation Authority owns 15 conservation areas
- Six are managed by the local municipality and 9 are operated by the Conservation Authority
- Three of the nine CA’s operated by SCRCA are regional campgrounds offering seasonal camping, overnight camping, and day use opportunities
- Combined, the three campgrounds have over 500 campsites, 420 of these are occupied by seasonal campers
- Surplus Revenues from our campgrounds are used to offset capital improvements
- The camping season in 2019 runs from April 26 to Thanksgiving Day

### **Camping Statistics:**

- Starting January 2<sup>nd</sup> we have accepted campsite reservations (overnight camping only) for our 3 regional campgrounds
- As of March 30<sup>th</sup> over 800 reservations have been taken, collecting \$108,502; compared to 839 reservations and \$109,000 collected in 2018 (HST adjusted)
- Seasonal sites will be filled to capacity at all 3 campgrounds; waiting lists are maintained to fill in vacancies as they become available

### **Campground Capital Upgrades 2019:**

#### **Warwick Conservation Area (\$29,000)**

- Replacement of hydro panels
- Workshop door replaced
- Subsurface drainage improvements in day use area
- Replace eaves trough and downspouts on pool washroom building
- Upgrade roadways with gravel
- Install a new fishing platform/ dock

#### **L.C. Henderson Conservation Area (\$24,500)**

- Replacement of hydro panels
- Replace two 60 gallon hot water heaters

- Install solar pole light
- Purchase two portable washrooms
- Upgrade roadways with gravel

A.W. Campbell Conservation Area (\$20,000)

- Riprap protection for main creek crossing
- Building roof replacements (Pool building and A Group Camp pavilion)
- Replacement of hydro panel
- Purchase two portable washrooms
- Replace 2 chemical feed pumps for the water treatment system
- Upgrade roadways with gravel

All Campgrounds

- Campground septic study to review the existing systems, monitor usage, determine system lifespans, and recommendations for upgrades

**BD-19-42**

**Gordon – Nemcek**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the Conservation Areas report dated March 30, 2019.”**

**CARRIED**

- Highland Glen Conservation Area is located on Lakeshore Road in the Town of Plympton-Wyoming
- Has an access roadway, two parking lots, pavilion, beach access, picnic tables, and a boat ramp into Lake Huron
- This property can be extremely busy with boat and vehicle traffic during the spring fishing season and the summer
- Due to the regional usage of the area the Board of Directors designated it a Regional Conservation Area in 2000
- The boat ramp was constructed in 1986 and the seawall protection in 1990
- In 2016 it was determined that upgrades were required to meet public needs and ensure the longevity and safety of the facility
- At the June, 2016 Board of Directors meeting, a motion was passed by the Board directing staff to pursue options to implement user fees for the use of the boat ramp and Conservation Area
- Options considered include a staffed gatehouse to collect fees, a metered and controlled entrance, and the MacKay Pay system
- The MacKay Pay system was selected as the preferred option and in November of 2016 the Board of Directors passed the 2017 Proposed Conservation Area fee schedule

**MacKay Pay System:**

The MacKay Pay system is an app that allows users to pay with their smart phone or through a toll free number. SCRCA is charged a transaction fee each time the service

is used. This system was implemented to allow for the collection of fees without the expense of staffing the site. Staff are able to view a list of all vehicles which have paid for boat launch or parking passes while on site.

Highland Glen fees are as follows:

Day Use Parking \$5.00  
 Season Parking Pass \$60.00  
 Day Use Boat Launch \$10.00  
 Season Boat Launch Pass \$120.00

**Capital Infrastructure Improvements 2017 & 2018**

- Approximately 40ft of new walkway has been installed along one side of the boat ramp allowing for more than one boat to dock at a time (2017)
- The existing walkway was elevated in response to rising lake levels (2017)
- Approximately 84' of existing seawall was repaired (2017)
- Armour stone was re-positioned to provide better protection to the seawall (2017)
- Two LED solar marine beacon lights have been installed to guide boaters after dark (2017)
- Beach access points have been re-graded (2017)
- Entrance roadway gravel and grading (2017)
- Approximately 60' of new walkway installed along the inside of the boat ramp (2018)
- One new beacon light installed on the outer seawall (2018)
- Welding repairs on a section of the south seawall (2018)
- A set of steel stairs installed to provide improved beach access (2018)

Note: During times of lower water level, dredging is often required to keep the boat launch functional

**Financial Impact:**

The following fees have been collected at Highland Glen.

2017 Fee Summary					
Fee Type	Fee (\$)	# Paid	Gross Total	Transaction Fees(\$0.35)	Net Revenue
Day Use Parking	\$5	89	\$445	\$31.15	\$413.85
Season Parking	\$60	9	\$540	\$3.15	\$536.85
Day Use Boat Ramp	\$10	270	\$2700	\$94.50	\$2605.50
Season Boat Ramp	\$120	66	\$7920	\$23.10	\$7896.90
<b>Totals</b>			<b>\$11605</b>	<b>\$151.90</b>	<b>\$11453.10</b>

2018 Fee Summary					
Fee Type	Fee (\$)	# Paid	Gross Total	Transaction Fees(\$0.35)	Net Revenue
Day Use Parking	\$5	207	\$1035	\$72.45	\$962.45

Season Parking	\$60	12	\$720	\$4.20	\$715.80
Day Use Boat Ramp	\$10	317	\$3170	\$110.95	\$3059.05
Season Boat Ramp	\$120	52	\$6240	\$18.20	\$6221.80
<b>Totals</b>			<b>\$11165</b>	<b>\$205.80</b>	<b>\$10959.20</b>

Funds raised from the fees will provide upgrades to the facilities at Highland Glen improving visitor experience. Surpluses will be allocated to Highland Glen Conservation Area Reserve to support future projects. In 2019, staff will create a Capital Improvement Plan for the property, addressing upgrades to infrastructure such as the boat ramp, access lane, parking surface, parking organization, and site amenities.

**BD-19-43**

**Schenk – Bruziewicz**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges this report dated March 28, 2019 regarding Highland Glen Conservation Area day use fees.”**

**CARRIED**

A discussion was held regarding the collection of fees for day use and several ideas were exchanged.

**BD-19-44**

**Schenk-Stark**

**“That the Board of Directors directs staff to remove the fees for day use and seasonal parking at Highland Glen Conservation Area and further recommends that the fees for use of the boat launch be revised to \$15 for single use and \$150 for a seasonal pass.”**

**CARRIED**

**Lake Ice Conditions**

Ice is still present along the eastern shoreline of Lake Huron, with noticeable buildup at Upperwash Beach, however thickness has greatly reduced with vast visible open water since the last update in February.

**Precipitation Conditions**

Average precipitation for the past three and six months are slightly below normal, however average totals for the past year are par with normal precipitation patterns, with Strathroy showing particularly above normal precipitation for the past year. A blast of winter was observed on March 30<sup>th</sup> and lasted into the early part of the week of April 1<sup>st</sup>, bringing snow depths of 2-6cm across the watershed. Warmer spring-like temperatures which followed removed the snow only a few days later. A snow survey was conducted on April 1<sup>st</sup> as part of the monitoring program with MNRF, and the associated snow survey maps can be found in Figure 2, below.

A SWE of 1-25mm was present in our watershed and across southwestern Ontario on April 1<sup>st</sup>, which is 200-250% of normal for this time of year (During this snow survey, the St. Clair watershed had an average of 4cm across the region.

## **Flood Threat**

Unseasonal temperatures and rainfall at the start of February greatly reduced ice and snow cover over the region and resulted in an early freshet.

The freshet, which began on February 4<sup>th</sup>, had four watershed conditions bulletins released during the event, including one water safety bulletin, two flood outlooks, and one flood watch bulletin. One water safety bulletin was issued on March 14<sup>th</sup> during a warm spell and rain event, however the received precipitation was 50% of what was forecasted and the event did not escalate.

At present, the flood threat on the Sydenham River is low. With the snowmelt early in the week of April 1<sup>st</sup>, water levels had risen but are since on the decline. All water levels are below the top of bank elevations with the exception of Florence and Black Creek, which are gradual slopes and prone to breaching into the natural adjacent floodplain.

Some precipitation is forecast in the upcoming week, however predictions are prone to changing. Soil has been saturated with the snowmelt, and any further rain could lead to rivers rising more quickly, however significant flooding is not expected at the time of this report. Water levels and the weather forecast will be monitored on an ongoing basis.

## **Great Lakes Levels**

Data collected from Fisheries and Oceans Canada water levels bulletin show the changes in water levels between months, years and decades. Data shows water levels are remaining high, with increases in the water levels compared to previous years. Furthermore, forecasts show water levels on Lakes Huron and St. Clair as being high but are not anticipated to exceed record water levels.

## **Seasonal Outlook**

Seasonal outlooks are provided each month by Jerry Shields, meteorologist for the Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services branch of the MNRF. This information is used internally to prepare for potential increased flood or drought conditions in the distant future. A summary of the outlook is provided below:

- April and May are forecast as being slightly warmer than seasonal for this time of year, with slightly above seasonal precipitation
- June is modelled to be quite cooler than normal with slightly below seasonal precipitation
- Summer is anticipated to have a late start, with cool temperatures from June continuing into July, and precipitation forecast as being slightly below seasonal
- El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) forecast to recovery back into El Nino (positive) conditions and remain strongly positive through the summer and into Fall. Matching years for ENSO conditions for April is 2010, and 1969 for summer.

**BD-19-45****Brown – Kennes**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 4, 2019 on the current watershed conditions and Great Lakes water levels.”**

**CARRIED**

- 2019 - 2020 Projects will be submitted on April 12, 2019
- The WECl program is still subject to funding approval from the Province
- All applications will be reviewed by a committee of provincial and Conservation Authority staff representatives in late April or early May and will be ranked in comparison to all submitted projects from across the Province
- If funding is confirmed for this program, a list of approved projects may be available in June
- A list of WECl projects for 2019 - 2020 is outlined below

<b>Structure</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Description of Work</b>	<b>Total Project Cost (\$)</b>	<b>Grant Requested (\$)</b>
Courtright Park	Courtright Park Shoreline Restoration – <b>Phase 3</b>	Shoreline work at Courtright Park along St. Clair River using armourstone and riprap.	\$700,000	\$350,000
Sarnia Shoreline Protection	Shoreline Repair (Helen and Kenwick St) <b>Phase 2</b>	Carry out construction of Phase 2 from the recommendation of engineering study.	\$800,000	\$400,000
Head Street/ Coldstream Dams	Decommissioning Study	Study to consider decommissioning of the Head street and Coldstream dams	\$120,000	\$60,000
W. Darcy McKeough Dam	Mechanical Inspection of Equipment and Painting	Inspect gate equipment and Waterproofing/sealant coating and paint the gatehouse building	\$150,000	\$75,000
ARDA Dyke	Hazard Tree Removal	Remove trees and shrubs along the dyke that pose stability issues to the dyke	\$24,000	\$12,000
W. Darcy McKeough Dam	Drain repairs, Channel floor repair	Perform Channel and Drain repairs on the McKeough Floodway as identified in the Engineering reports.	\$60,000	\$30,000

**BD-19-46**

**Burrell – Miller**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 4, 2019 on Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure Projects and approves the projects submitted for funding in 2019-2020 and further will assist staff in obtaining matching funds, where required, to support these projects upon confirmation of funding approval.”**

**CARRIED**

**Courtright Waterfront Restoration – Phase 2**

- A budget of \$350,000 was confirmed for the project (WECI \$80,000; St. Clair Township - \$250,000, Great Lakes Community Guardian fund \$20,000)
- Construction work started late February, 2019 by Murray Mills Excavating
- As of April 4, 2019, All works have been completed under 20 working days of the contract.
- All in-water works were completed before March 30, 2019.
- 1 outfall was located and repair was completed as designed
- Approximately 60 meters of Shoreline work has been completed.
- Due to timeline restrictions, no additional work will be completed.
- Minor restoration and repair work is on-going and the crew will be completing restoration in May, 2019.
- Pictures below was taken on March 29 looking south and north along the Courtright Park.

**BD-19-47**

**Brown – Burrell**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 4, 2019 on the Phase II Courtright Park Shore Protection Project.”**

**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 have 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 the review process, often by 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.

In 2018, Staff at SCRCA were successful in the first round of applications to NDMP for floodplain mapping – Phase 1 work which includes City of Sarnia and St. Clair Township. This work is currently being undertaken by Riggs Engineering.

SCRCA has received a notification from NDMP about **successful funding approval** for **Phase 2** to complete an updated floodplain mapping study for the remaining part of the watershed. Total contribution from NDMP - \$155,250.

With this work completed, SCRCA will have updated floodplain mapping for the entire watershed.

**Finance:**

The total cost of this project is estimated to be \$310,500. A proposal from Riggs Engineering will be submitted by mid-April.

50% of the costs have to be matched by the remaining municipalities, of which 15% is in-kind contributions such as labour, use of facilities and equipment, which can be readily absorbed by SCRCA. SCRCA is seeking the remainder (\$135,000) from remaining Municipalities. Staff will continue to look into other funding sources to provide matching funds for this project. As in Phase I, the special levy for the remaining municipalities will be determined based on Modified Current Value Assessment, as the levy of the Authority budget.

**BD-19-48**

**Marriott – Gordon**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 4, 2019 on NDMP funding Phase II and directs staff to work with the municipalities to obtain the required matching funding and continue to acquire proposals from Riggs Engineering.”**

**CARRIED**

In 2007, the Canadian Remedial Action Plan (RAP) Implementation Committee (CRIC) started a detailed assessment of the sediment contamination in the river along the Sarnia petrochemical complex and extending to the southern tip of Stag Island. A report on the initial risk assessment of the sediments was completed in 2009. This report helped to identify three priority areas within the area of study.

Environ environmental consultants was retained by the SCRCA to provide advice on sediment management options in each of the three priority areas, resulting in a 2013



report. Community and First Nation engagement was conducted in 2013 on the different sediment management options described in the report. Feedback received indicated a preference for the use of hydraulic dredging and backfilling.

### **Project Highlights:**

The final step before implementation is the need to prepare a detailed engineering and design plan of the preferred options. SCRCA is working on the Request for Proposals (RFP) document to be provided to pre-qualified consultants with experience in developing detailed engineering designs for contaminated sediment. It is anticipated that preparation of the plan will take two years to complete.

Staff at SCRCA are currently reviewing a draft RFP and a list of pre-qualified consultants with MECP, DOW Canada and ECCC. Once the list is established, the RFP will be finalized and provided to the consultants on April 23, 2019.

A number of open houses are being organized to educate the community of the tasks and timelines associated with the preparation of the engineering and design plan to manage the three areas of historical sediment contamination along the St. Clair River.

- Sarnia open house – April 15, 2019 from 6:00 pm – 8:00pm
- Wallaceburg open house – Wednesday April 17, 2019 from 12:30 pm – 2:30 pm
- Courtright open house – April 17, 2019 from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Meetings have also been arranged with the Aamjiwnaang First Nation Environment Committee for April 16, 2019, and the Walpole Island First Nation Heritage Centre Committee for April 17, 2019.

### **Finance:**

All costs associated with this phase of the project work will be covered through funding provided by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and Dow Canada.

The outcome of the Request for Proposals process will determine what consulting firm is selected to prepare the engineering and design plan, as well as the cost to prepare the plan.

### **BD-19-49**

#### **Brennan – Burrell**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 4, 2019 regarding the St. Clair River Sediment Remediation project and directs staff to acquire proposals from pre-qualified engineering consulting firms and further delegates the Chair and General Manager to approve the selected consulting firm and sign an agreement for services, subject to confirmation that all costs to undertake the work will be covered through the available funding.”**

**CARRIED**

## **New Floating Dock Proposal**

- Fawn Island is a small Canadian island located in the St. Clair River between Sombra, Ontario and Marine City, Michigan.
- The Fawn Island Residents Association (FIRA) have outlined concerns regarding permitted use as well as structural and safety concerns regarding existing docks south of the channel (identified in the picture below)
- Fawn Island residents have growing concerns regarding emergency egress for personal watercraft adjacent the existing dock.
- FIRA contacted SCRCA to allow installation of 4 floating docks on the south side of the parking lot along the outlet of the McKeough Floodway.
- SCRCA received a letter from St. Clair Township confirming the need for emergency access to the Fawn Island residents. The letter requested SCRCA to consider this proposal.
- SCRCA had received confirmation from the group to address:
  - Costs associated with installation, removal and maintenance (Received)
  - Insurance certificate exonerating SCRCA and Township from any liability (Pending)
  - Agreement to install and remove the dock annually (Received)

## **Outlet Park**

In Spring of 2017, St. Clair Township staff contacted SCRCA to consider the outlet park as a parking space for the residents of Fawn Island. SCRCA staff coordinated with Golder Associates to assist with providing a concept of parking lot. The following concerns were considered:

- effects of Ice and Ice Jam along St. Clair River
- wave action
- high flows in St. Clair River
- floodway operation and high flows

The parking lot was **installed in summer of 2017**. The principle use of the outlet park had shifted from a public park with modest parking area supporting passive recreation and fishing opportunities to an area with significant parking with docking facilities which was available for the use of Fawn Island residents.

It was anticipated that an agreement from St. Clair Township to assume management and maintenance of the park as an open municipal park which will also function as the primary parking, launch and ferry dock for property owners on Fawn Island. Such an agreement will require a tree saving plan, approval of any construction plans and construction and maintenance costs to be borne by the municipality.

Recent communications with the St. Clair Township indicate an unwillingness to enter any type of maintenance agreement. Staff continue to correspond with the Township to find an agreeable solution between SCRCA and Township.

## **BD-19-50**

### **Burrell – Kennes**

**“That the Board of Directors approves the placement of the floating docks as outlined on the south side of the Outlet Park upon receipt of outstanding documentation, including signed hold harmless agreements from all dock funders and confirmation of dock use being open to all Fawn Island residents and further that staff and Board members representing the Township of St. Clair work with the municipal staff and Council to develop an understanding of maintenance requirements and financial responsibilities for the Outlet Park.”**

**CARRIED**

Stewardship projects (Grants available) SCRCA secures funding from federal, provincial, municipal and private 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 advice and project design and where applicable, support projects with grants. Call today for more information.

### **Update:**

Staff have applied for the following grants to support landowner stewardship projects and education & outreach:

- Department of Fisheries and Oceans – Aquatic Habitat Stewardship Program - \$140,000/year for 3 years
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans – Canada Nature Fund \$960,000 for 4 years
- EcoAction - \$78,000 for stewardship and educational outreach in the St. Clair Region

### **SCRCA Habitat Stewardship Program 2018-2019**

Total Project Cost: \$647,500 (excludes the value of land retirement of 32.15 ha/79.44 acres)

Grants awarded to Stewardship Projects: \$336,300

Staff assisted or found grant funding for the following projects:

- 3 Erosion Control Projects
- 1 Organic Amendments Project
- 63 Riparian Buffer and Marginal Land Tree Planting Projects (~73,070 trees)
- 10 Wetland Projects
- 2 Cattle Exclusion Fencing Projects
- 1 Bank Stabilization Project
- 1 Grassed Waterway Project

### **Outreach, Education, Partner Projects**

- **March 14**  
Lake Huron Coastal Centre for Conservation Steering Committee meeting for Coastal Action Plan development
- **March 28**  
Innovative Farmers Association of Ontario Board Meeting
- **April 4**

Phosphorus & Stewardship in the Sydenham River Watershed Presentation at  
Lambton Cattlemen's Association Meeting

**BD-19-51**

**McGregor – Brennan**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 3, 2019 on the Healthy Watersheds Program.”**

**CARRIED**

Through funding provided by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA) is coordinating the development of a Phosphorus Management Plan for the Sydenham River watershed to reduce the impact of this nutrient on the Great Lakes basin. When phosphorus becomes available in excessive amounts in freshwater environments it can cause algal blooms and hypoxic (low oxygen) conditions. This severely degrades the water quality of lakes and rivers and can impact the safety of water for drinking, recreation, and wildlife. The objective of this multi-year project (potentially 2018-2022) is to work with local stakeholders and communities to identify sources of phosphorus, collect and analyze available data, and determine the most effective solutions for our region. A community engagement and outreach strategy will also be developed to implement the Management Plan.

On November 27, 2018, the SCRCA hosted an initial stakeholder meeting to introduce and receive direction for the project. Over 65 people were in attendance representing a variety of interests including municipalities, counties, First Nations, federal and provincial government, agricultural and wastewater sectors, neighbouring conservation authorities, educational institutions, community groups, and other individuals.

Four committees have since been established, including an Advisory Committee, Water Quality Technical Team, Non-Point Source (NPS) Working Group, and Point Source (PS) Working Group that will be coordinated by the SCRCA Project Team. SCRCA Board Members, Steve Miller and Terry Burrell, will sit on the NPS and PS Working Groups, respectively, and will both be on the Advisory Committee.

Feedback from the November Meeting was used to develop drafts of guiding documents for the project, including a Project Charter, NPS and PS Working Group Terms of Reference, and a Plan Outline.

On March 7, 2019, the first meetings for the NPS and PS Working Groups were held where feedback was received on the proposed Project Charter, Terms of Reference, and Project Outline. The discussions at these meetings were very productive and will be used to guide further progress on the project.

In the upcoming months, the first Advisory Committee and Water Quality Technical Team meetings will be held.

The Management Plan “Draft Project Charter” was also reviewed.

### **Strategic Objectives:**

The Phosphorus Management Plan is a project that ties into our existing programs and will help us to meet our strategic objective to focus on programs that reduce the loading of phosphorus to the Great Lakes in order to protect, manage, and restore our natural systems.

Goal 2:

*“Protect, manage, and restore our natural systems including woodlands, wetlands, waterways, and lakes.”*

Strategic Actions:

*“Develop New Tools to Promote Stewardship Practices and Evaluate the Effectiveness of Best Management Practices: Evaluate the current model of landowner outreach and voluntary stewardship and explore new tools and collaborations that expand conservation opportunities utilizing information from our watershed report cards. Best Management Practices (BMPs) are encouraged to promote soil health, improve water quality, and provide for more resilient watersheds. Efforts need to be made to evaluate the various BMPs to ensure they are creating the results expected such as reducing nutrient loss from farm fields (with a focus on phosphorus) and decreasing sedimentation in watercourses. This is an opportunity to work with colleges and universities, farming groups, and others to develop solid science to evaluate BMP effectiveness.”*

*“Focus on Programs to Reduce Phosphorous Loading into the Great Lakes: Governments on both sides of the border have been taking action setting targets for the Great Lakes to deal with the problem of excess Phosphorus. Stewardship programs, while also addressing other watershed needs, should focus on reducing Phosphorous levels entering the Great Lakes.”*

### **BD-19-52**

**Schenk – McMillan**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 3, 2019 on the Sydenham River Watershed Phosphorus Management Plan.”**

**CARRIED**

All tree planting activities take place in the spring of the year. Vegetation control operations are carried out in both the spring and the fall for trees planted within the past 3 years. Several larger planting projects are maintained throughout the growing season on County and CA lands plus several other private corporate planting projects. Approximately 30 individual sites totalling approximately 60,000 are planted annually. Vegetation control work is carried out on approximately 100 sites totalling over 250,000 trees annually.

### **Tree Planting Program**

- This year conservation services staff will be planting approximately 68,000 trees for 36 separate projects on private, corporate public lands.

- Two tractor-mounted mechanical tree planters each operated by a 3 person crew and one 4 person hand planting crew will be deployed in the last week of April to plant trees over a 3 to 4 week time frame.
- Another 5000 trees will be sold to a number of landowners to plant on their own.
- We currently have several federal, provincial and local grant dollars available as financial incentives for property owners this year to subsidize a larger portion of the cost of trees, planting services and long term vegetation management.
- All trees planted under this program will receive a pre-emergent herbicide treatment soon after planting unless otherwise requested by the landowner.
- Approximately 200,000 trees are scheduled for herbicide retreatment this spring for sites that were planted in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

### **Large Stock Trees**

- Approximately 600 large stock trees have been ordered for the spring
- Two municipalities are ordering trees this spring.
- The Municipality of Brooke-Alvinston has been providing a financial incentive for several years now to its resident property owners who purchase and plant trees on their properties through this program.
- The Township of Warwick is new to our program this year and has also provided a financial incentive to its resident landowners who order large stock trees to plant on their properties.
- Trees range in size from a half metre tall for evergreen trees to 2.0 metres tall for the hardwood trees. Most of the trees are potted or in a dirt ball with burlap. Some species and oversized trees come in bare root form. The bare root trees are less expensive, however, they require much more protection when transporting and storing.

**Director’s Comment:** A request was made for a report providing a breakdown of Municipality participation in the Tree Planting Program

**BD-19-53**

**Miller – Westgate**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 3, 2019 regarding Conservation Services projects and programs.”**

**CARRIED**

The Authority is contracted by the County of Lambton to apply a larvicidal treatment to all municipal catch basins in cities, towns, villages and rural areas throughout the county. The conservation services department is responsible for the Authority’s pesticide operators license, has three permanent staff with MOECC applicator licenses and one staff person to train and licence seasonal staff as pesticide technicians. SCRCA has a positive working relationship with the county, has been providing this service since 2006 as well as other services to the County and therefore this program is a good fit for both organizations. The conservation authority works with Lambton Public Health for this program and takes direction from the health protection department.

**Update:**

- The Conservation Authority will be treating catch basins again this summer under contract with the County of Lambton. SCRCA obtains permits each year from MOECC and trains, certifies and registers summer staff as pesticide technicians to treat catch basins with a mosquito larvicide product.
- Catch basins are treated with methoprene (mosquito growth regulator) between June 25<sup>th</sup> and August 25<sup>th</sup> with 3 separate applications at 21-day intervals for mosquito control during the most vulnerable time of the year for transmitting the disease. Methoprene prevents the mosquito pupa from emerging as a biting adult mosquito. Approximately 65% Lambton County's municipal catch basins are located in the City of Sarnia.
- SCRCA staff conduct pre-treatment larval activity sampling as well as post treatment efficacy testing in part with the treatment program by collecting mosquito pupa later in the summer. Pupa are monitored for adult emergence. Past efficacy monitoring averages 80% effectiveness at controlling mosquito pupa from emerging into adult biting mosquitos.

Dan McMillan offered his thanks to SCRCA on behalf of Health Canada for larvicide treatments offered to Aamjiwnaang First Nation.

**BD-19-54**

**Burrell – Brown**

**“The Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 4, 2019 on the application of larvicide to catch basins in Lambton County for the control of West Nile Virus in 2019.”**

**CARRIED**

The Regulations Activity Summary Report dated April 2, 2019 on “Development, Interference with Wetlands & Alterations to Shorelines & Watercourses” Regulations (Ontario Regulation 171/06) from February 1, 2019 to March 31, 2019 was reviewed.

**BD-19-55**

**Burrell – Miller**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges and concurs with the Regulations Activity Summary Report dated April 2, 2019 on "Development, Interference with Wetlands & Alterations to Shorelines & Watercourses" Regulations (Ontario Regulation 171/06) from February 1, 2019 to March 31, 2019.”**

**CARRIED**

A declaration of pecuniary interest was made by Carmen McGregor.

The Planning Activity Summary Report dated April 2, 2019 for February 1, 2019 – March 31, 2019 was reviewed.

**BD-19-56**

**MacKinnon – Burrell**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority’s monthly Planning Activity Summary Report dated April 2, 2019 for February 1, 2019 – March 31, 2019.”**

**CARRIED**

The Municipal Drain Activity report associated with the Drainage Act and Conservation Authorities Act Protocol (DART) from November, 2018 to March, 2019.

**Director’s Comments:** It was requested that Dallas Cundick confirm via e-mail whether consultation occurred with Sarnia drainage superintendents regarding the Policy on closed drains adopted on September 7, 2017

**BD-19-57**

**Nemcek – Marriott**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges and concurs with the November, 2018 – March, 2019 municipal drain activity report associated with the Drainage Act and Conservation Authorities Act Protocol (DART).”**

**CARRIED**

The revenue and expenditure report to February 28, 2019 was reviewed.

**BD-19-58**

**Burrell – MacKinnon**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the revenue and expenditure report to February 28, 2019, as it relates to the budget.”**

**CARRIED**

The January, February and March 2019 disbursements were reviewed.

**BD-19-59**

**Kennes – Brennan**

**“That the Board of Directors approves the January, February and March 2019 disbursements as presented in the amount of \$873,269.68.”**

**CARRIED**

The status report on the 2019 general levy receipts was reviewed.

**BD-19-60**

**Gordon – Marriott**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the status report on the 2019 general levy receipts to date.”**

**CARRIED**

The Investment reports to February 28, 2019 were reviewed.



**BD-19-61**

**Kennes – Miller**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the Investment reports to February 28, 2019.”**

**CARRIED**

The November 28, 2018 Joint Health & Safety Committee meeting minutes were reviewed.

**BD-19-62**

**Brown – Burrell**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the November 28, 2018 Joint Health & Safety Committee meeting minutes.”**

**CARRIED**

The Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC) held their last meeting on January 24, 2019 at the ARLANXEO facility in Sarnia, Ontario. At this meeting ARLANXEO gave a presentation to the BPAC focussed on their safety protocols and environmental safeguards. The next BPAC meeting is being held on April 4, 2019 at the St. Clair Power Plant in East China, Michigan.

On February 21, 2019 Kelly Johnson, St. Clair River RAP Coordinator, participated in the Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation’s Speaker Series held in Sarnia, Ontario. Kelly provided the audience with a broad overview of the St. Clair River AOC and highlighted progress that has been made towards delisting of the St. Clair River.

The St. Clair River Science Symposium is being held in Sombra, Ontario on the evening of April 10, 2019. This is a free event open to the public and will feature informative presentations on fish diversity, health and habitat. A buffet dinner will be held prior to the presentations. The Symposium is being hosted by Environment and Climate Change Canada, Aamjiwnaang First Nation, and Walpole Island First Nation.

Kelly has or will be participating in the following outreach events in the AOC:

- St. Clair River Days – Aamjiwnaang First Nation, March 6, 2019
- Aamjiwnaang Earth Day Event – Aamjiwnaang First Nation, April 27, 2019
- Lambton Heritage Museum Speaker Series – Grand Bend, May 8, 2019

As mentioned in the December 2018 St. Clair River AOC update, the Canadian Remedial Action Plan Implementation Committee (CRIC) is working to finalize the 2012 – 2017 Accomplishments Report. The document is currently in the final stages of editing and will be printed and available to the public by the end of April 2019.

**BD-19-63**

**Burrell – McMillan**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 2, 2019 on the St. Clair River Area of Concern.”**

**CARRIED**

Staff are proposing a Conservation Authority Project Tour on Thursday, June 27, 2019 from 8:30 am to 12:00 pm. The bus will leave and return to the Warwick Conservation Area located at 6101 Warwick Village Road. Lunch will be provided and will be followed by the Board meeting. In 2019, the project tour will focus on the northern region of our watershed.

**Proposed Tour Highlights:**

- Lambton County Phragmites Partnership
- Healthy Lake Huron Program and Agricultural Outreach
- Esli Dodge Conservation Area, Forest
- TD Tree Days, Forest
- Highway 402 Tree Planting
- C.J. McEwen and/or Highland Glen Conservation Areas
- Lambton County Heritage Forest

**BD-19-64**

**Burrell – Miller**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 1, 2019 on the proposed project tour scheduled for June 27, 2019.”**

**CARRIED**

**Winter Programing:**

Thanks to the Sarnia Lambton Environmental Association, Groundwater and River Bottom Critters programs were the focus of our winter season for students in Kindergarten to Grade 12. Plains Midstream has provided funding for the Spring Water Awareness Program, allowing the program to continue into its 8<sup>th</sup> year. Friends of the St. Clair River continue to sponsor the River Rap program. See below for detailed explanation of recent expansion of this program.

Severe winter weather affected how many primary classes were able to visit Henderson Conservation Area, for outdoor winter programming. Students who were able to attend experienced an enjoyable and educational wonder-filled day. Maple Syrup school program was revived this year and a full week of classes enjoyed their time learning about the tradition of maple syrup production, from the early First Nations, pioneer and modern methods.

Elementary school students visited the A.W. Campbell Conservation Area to get a first-hand look at how maple syrup production has evolved throughout the years. Pictured left is a student taking part in the maple syrup sap collection activity.

## **Special Events:**

### **Maple Syrup Festival**

Over 800 community members visited the Alvinston Maple Syrup Festival at AW Campbell Conservation Area March 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. Bright sunny days and cold frosty nights made for great weather conditions and helped to keep the ground a little less muddy.

### **Canoe Race**

April 28<sup>th</sup> is set aside for this year's paddle down the Sydenham. Find a partner and enjoy the beauty of the river; Board Members are encouraged to come and join the fun! Registration begins at 10:00 a.m.

### **River Rap Program Secondary School Expansion:**

Pilot programs are being run April 1-16<sup>th</sup> for this new program expansion. The program is designed to meet the needs of multiple curriculums (ex. Biology, Chemistry, Geography) allowing for high numbers of classes to participate. This new program focuses on the issue of excessive phosphorus in Lake Erie & is intended to give youth a voice in the development of the 'Sydenham River Phosphorus Management Plan'.

### **New Secondary School Environmental Partnership:**

Education Staff have formed a new partnership with Strathroy District Collegiate Institute, as they begin a new 3-credit Environment course in conjunction with a new Environment SHSM. This means Strathroy secondary students now have opportunity to specialize their education toward future environmental studies. SCRCA is excited to assist SDCI wherever possible, to ensure this program's success.

### **ICE Training**

ICE (Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship) training partnerships continue to grow. SCRCA education staff have two training sessions planned for spring 2019. One partnership with St. François Xavier French Catholic School, Sarnia, will focus on coping with mental health issues amid today's stresses by spending time in nature. The other training with Strathroy District Collegiate Institute, in Strathroy will focus on forest management in local Conservation Areas, in particular managing community safety/accessibility in the presence of beavers at Strathroy CA.

### **Fun Fest**

SCRCA staff will be participating in Kids Fun Fest 2019 on Saturday June 8th in Sarnia. The booth will promote camping and other SCRCA programs. SCRCA staff will provide children with a hands-on nature themed activity. Past years have included themes such as nest building, mud painting, temporary nature art, and nature-themed games.

Frank Nemcek expressed his thanks regarding the support of the Maple Syrup Festival.

**BD-19-65**

**Nemcek – Burrell**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the Conservation Education Report, dated April 3, 2019 including the winter programming, program development and expansion, Community Partnerships, and Special Events.”**

**CARRIED**

A recess was called at 11:20 a.m. and the meeting resumed at 11:30 a.m.

**BD-19-66**

**Brennan – Burrell**

**“That the Board of Directors agrees to recess and reconvene at 11:30 a.m.”**

A presentation was given by Grant Inglis of Little, Inglis, Price & Ewer LLP.

**BD-19-67**

**Gordon – MacKinnon**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the presentation given by Little, Inglis, Price & Ewer, LLP regarding the legal aspect of the roles, responsibilities of SCRCA Board Members.”**

**CARRIED**

**Under New Business:**

The last two weeks have seen some significant communication by the Province regarding Conservation Authorities.

On April 5<sup>th</sup>, two postings to the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) outlined proposals being brought forward by the Ministries of Environment, Conservation and Parks and Natural Resources and Forestry (attached).

These postings outline in brief summary the Province’s intention to:

- Define Conservation Authorities core mandatory program and services
- Ensure open and transparent communications and agreements with municipalities regarding core and non-core programs
- Enable to Minister to appoint and investigator to audit and report
- Clarify the duties of Board members
- Update or create definitions for key regulatory terms (i.e. wetlands, watercourses, pollution, interference, conservation of land, etc.)
- Exempt ‘low risk’ development activities and reduce regulatory restrictions from the Authority’s permit program
- Require periodic review and consultation on internal policies that guide permitting decisions as well as public notification of regulatory mapping
- Establishment, monitoring and reporting on service delivery standards

These documents were posted without any consultation with Conservation Authorities.

These proposals could lead to legislative changes that would have significant impacts to Conservation Authority structure, operation and regulations. As a result, staff are working on a draft response to these postings to be circulated to the Board for review, comment and approval prior to submission to the ERO.

Last week, the Provincial government released the 2019 Budget entitled Protecting What Matters Most. As anticipated, with the government's previously stated intentions, funding was cut to most Ministries, including MNRF which was cut by almost 20% and MECP which was cut by 35% (including the elimination of time limited investments).

Subsequent correspondence from MNRF (attached) provided notification that the Transfer Payment from the Province to support eligible natural hazard programs of flood control, erosion control, flood forecasting and warning, municipal plan input and review and administration will be \$160,037.80 for 2019. In 1996, the provincial government committed to providing financial support in equal partnership with municipalities to fund these program areas. In 1996, SCRCA outlined a budget of \$620,006 for those program areas and received \$310,003 in funding from the Province. Despite its commitment to match municipal funding to these program areas, funding from the Province had remained unchanged from 1996 to 2018. Therefore the 2019 cut to core mandatory programs is over 48%.

Staff will provide a report to the June Board meeting detailing options that may provide relief of this funding shortfall.

**BD-19-68**

**Bruzewicz – McMillan**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 17, 2019 regarding Provincial communications regarding Conservation Authorities.”**

**CARRIED**

**BD-19-69**

**Burrell – Nemcek**

**“That the Board of Directors directs staff to prepare a draft response to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry regarding Environmental Registry of Ontario posting #013-4992 Focusing conservation authority development permits on the protection of people and property and further directs staff to prepare a draft response to the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks regarding Environmental Registry of Ontario posting #013-5018 Modernizing conservation authority operations – Conservation Authorities Act for circulation to the Board for comments and subsequently for approval at an Executive Committee meeting to be scheduled in mid-May.”**

**CARRIED**

**BD-19-70**

**Burrell – Nemcek**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the correspondence dated April 12, 2019 from the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks notifying the Authority that the 2019-2020 transfer payment for Section 39 Eligible Natural Hazard Management Grant will be \$160,037.80, a 48.38% reduction (\$149,965.20) from the \$310,003.00 received annually to support Section 39 programs, which had remained unchanged since 1996, and further direct staff to prepare a report for the June meeting of the Board of Directors detailing any options that may provide relief of this shortfall in the approved 2019 Authority Budget.”**

**CARRIED**

**BD-19-71**

**Loosley – Brennan**

**“That the meeting be adjourned.”**

**CARRIED**



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**Joe Faas**  
**Chair**



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**Brian McDougall**  
**General Manager**