



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: November 14, 2019 Time: 1:00 p.m.
Administration Office, Strathroy

Directors Present: Alan Broad, John Brennan, Pat Brown, Andy Bruziewicz, Terry Burrell, Joe Faas, Chair; Frank Kennes, Brad Loosley, Betty Ann MacKinnon, Kevin Marriott, Mark McGill, Dan McMillan, Steve Miller, Frank Nemcek, Ron Schenk, Mike Stark

Regrets: Larry Gordon, Vice-Chair; Carmen McGregor, Laurie Scott, Jerry Westgate

Staff Present: Donna Blue, Manager of Communications; Erin Carroll, Director of Biology; Dallas Cundick, Manager of Planning and Regulations; Chris Durand, Manager of IT/ GIS; Ashley Fletcher, Administrative Assistant/ Board Coordinator; Sarah Hume, Payroll/ Accounting Clerk; Brian McDougall, General Manager; 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

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-19-153

Brown – Burrell

“That the Board of Directors adopts the agenda as presented”

CARRIED

It is 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-19-154

Marriott – MacKinnon

“That the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting, held October 17, 2019, be approved as distributed.”

CARRIED

Meeting with Minister of Environment, Conservation & Parks Yurek

- A meeting with Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) was held on the morning of Tuesday, November 5th
- Chair Faas, Vice Chair Gordon and Brian McDougall attended the meeting

- Holly Fullager (meeting coordinator) and Nicholas Cunha from the Minister's Office, Rebecca Teare from the Deputy Minister's Office, Ling Mark and Jessica Isaac from Great Lakes and Inland Waters Branch all attended the meeting. Representatives of both MPP McNaughton and MPP Bailey participated via conference call
- MECP staff were welcoming and engaged, and were very genuine in their appreciation of our time and information.
- Unfortunately, as of Monday November 4th, the duration of each Authority's meeting with MECP were reduce from 90 minutes to 60 minutes – we were not informed of this change until the meeting was more than half over
- We walked, then skipped through our presentation with our Chair and Vice highlighting key messages and confirming municipal support for the Authority and our programs
- Several questions were asked and the Chair, Vice Chair and General Manager all conveyed the information contained in a pre-prepared list.
- The Minister's staff confirmed that this is preliminary consultation and that further consultation will be coming this winter
- To close the meeting, we were asked if we wished to provide comment on More Homes, More Choices and the Ministers correspondence during the summer
- We brought forward our concerns regarding "mandatory/core programs", the definition of each program area and what programs fall within the categories, and followed it up with explanations of the source(s) of funding for each of our program areas
- Staff thanked us for coming and for the information provided. They look forward to further discussion as consultations continues
- Although the document was prepared specifically for this meeting, the Chair, Vice Chair, General Manager and staff see this document as a valuable tool in conveying information with our municipal partners. Appreciation to Donna Blue, Manager of Communications for her efforts in preparing the presentation, which was well-received by Ministry staff.
- It may even provide some clarity to our budget discussions and may be used going forward as a base document for annual planning and reporting documents as well as even future budgets
- At the conclusion of the meeting, digital and print copies of the following were provided to the Ministry staff: 2018 Annual Report, 2018 Audited Financial Statements, 2016 Strategic Plan – A Way Forward, Watershed Report Card Report and Summary, Education Program and Campground Brochures.
- Minutes of the meeting will be circulated and will include an offer to provide comment
- Further consultation, potentially this winter, will be important to determine the future relationship between Conservation Authorities and the Provincial Government

The Presentation document provided for the meeting with the MECP was reviewed.

“Mandatory/ Core” programs

- This document does not have the same content as the chart presented at the October meeting which outlined the “Mandatory / Core” programs of the Province, Municipalities and the Conservation Authority – however, it does answer some of the questions that could have been answered by the requested updates to that table
- The updated table will be provided prior to the December meeting as requested

Director’s Comments:

Enquiries were made whether a meeting has been granted with local MPP’s. It is thought that more information from the Minister’s office is needed before meetings can occur. Brian McDougall will continue to make this request. The Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) annual conference in January may offer an opportunity to reach MPPs.

Directors brought forth concerns regarding the perception of the Conservation Authority by member Municipalities. The General Manager acknowledged these concerns and responded that he and Chair, Joe Faas have scheduled a meeting to discuss relationship building and the forming of a memorandum of understanding for a way forward. A positive start has been made with Planning Departments across the watershed and customer service is being improved by the recent addition of a Planning Clerk.

Bd-19-155

Schenk – Stark

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the General Manager’s report, dated November 6, 2019.”

CARRIED

The report on Business Arising from the October 17, 2019 Board of Directors Meeting was reviewed.

BD-19-156

Miller – McMillan

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the updates on business arising from the October 17, 2019 Board of Directors meeting.”

CARRIED

Conservation Area Fee Increases

Fee increases are a result of increasing staffing costs, maintenance, park upgrades, and general cost increases. Fee increases are also required to ensure financial reserves are maintained at levels sufficient to undertake large capitals expenditures (septic system updates, road improvements, etc.) when required. With the proposed

increases our rates remain at or below most local private and regional Conservation Authority campgrounds.

Summary of Significant Proposed Changes to Conservation Area Fees

Several changes to the Conservation Area Fees have been proposed for the 2020 season. Below is a summary of the significant changes:

1. Seasonal camping season shortened (April 25, 2020 – October 12, 2020)
 - Previously April 15 – April 15 the following year
 - Seasonal camping permit now aligns with open season for the park
 - Campers who do not wish to remain in the park for the following year will be required to vacate at the end of the season
 - Previously, campers could remain on-site until the following April, leaving staff scrambling to repair sites and fill them when campers vacated in the Spring
 - With a paid deposit for the following season, trailers can remain on-site through the winter
2. A \$200 non-refundable deposit is required by Thanksgiving 2020 to reserve site for 2021
 - Will allow staff to better plan for the following season
3. Change from \$60 Weekends to Off-Peak pricing
 - 60 buck weekends were introduced when the parks had very low occupancy outside of July/ August and long weekends
 - Very successful promotion that has filled the parks most weekends during this slower season
 - Change to off-peak pricing will allow campers to take advantage of reduced rates 7 days/week
 - Allow those who can camp mid-week to do so, freeing up sites on the weekends
 - Encourage campers to stay more than 2 nights during off-peak
4. Increase to \$13 reservation fee
 - Previously the reservation fee was \$8
 - \$13 is comparable to other Conservation Authority campgrounds and provincial parks
 - Increase will offset the costs of CAMIS (on-line reservation system launching in January of 2020)
5. Removing swimming passes from the fee schedule
 - Almost no sales annually
 - Day use visitors will still have access to the pool when it is open (regular day use fees apply)

A comparison of camping fees from neighbouring Conservation Authorities and private campgrounds was reviewed.

BD-19-157

Marriott – Nemcek

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated October 30, 2019 regarding the proposed 2020 Conservation Area fees.”

CARRIED

SCRCA owns lands that make up 15 conservation areas. Of these, three operate as campgrounds, and twelve are day use areas. These lands have been acquired for a number of reasons, mainly flood protection, recreation, and to protect significant environmental features. Properties acquired for flood protection are used for parks or other recreational purposes where feasible.

Flood Protection - In order to protect against flooding, Conservation Authorities have constructed and maintained protective infrastructure such as dams and dykes or purchased lands located in hazardous areas. In the past, both the provincial and federal governments have contributed to these projects. (Conservation Ontario)

From the SCRCA Watershed Plan Background Report: Recreation Land Management (1984):

3.0 Program Direction

The revised Conservation Authorities Act of 1981 sets out that the Authority has the mandate to use lands owned or controlled by the Authority for park or other recreational purposes.

3.1 Identification and Rationale

Properties managed under the Conservation and Recreation Land Management Program were in most cases, acquired under the Water Management Program and then subsequently utilized for recreational purposes. Areas such as Melwood and Highland Glen were specifically purchased for their recreation potential.

Under the Conservation Authorities Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. C.27, any lands owned by a Conservation Authority are governed by the Province. Below is the section of the Act that addresses lands:

Approval of Minister

S.21 (2) If the Minister has made a grant to an authority under section 39 in respect of land, the authority shall not sell, lease or otherwise dispose of the land under clause (1) (c) without the approval of the Minister except if,

- (a) The disposition is for provincial or municipal infrastructure and utility purposes;
- (b) The province, the provincial agency, board or commission affected by the disposition or the municipal government, agency, board or commission affected by the disposition has approved it; and
- (c) The authority informs the Minister of the disposition. 2010, c. 16, Sched. 10, s. 1

Terms and conditions

(3) The Minister may impose terms and conditions on an approval given under subsection (2), including a condition that the authority pay a specified share of the proceeds of the disposition to the Minister. 1996, c. 1, Sched. M, s. 44 (3).

A summary of properties and their size, use and environmental features/ hazards was reviewed.

All 3 campgrounds contain a combination of floodplain, Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSW), and woodlands. Campground lands were acquired through government funding and donation. The campgrounds are financially self-sufficient and employ approximately 30 full-time, part-time, or seasonal staff.

All properties still provide the function of either flood protection or recreation. All properties, with the exception of CJ McEwen were believed to have been purchased with at least some provincial funds. The sale of lands are subject to the approval of the Minister and proceeds may be subject to terms and conditions. At this time, staff have not identified surplus conservation area lands.

Director's Comments:

Directors clarified that the original intent of the request for information on surplus properties was to include a summary and justification of surplus buildings and structures on CA operated lands. General Manager Brian McDougall responded that master plans are being drafted for conservation areas, starting with Coldstream Conservation Area, which holds multiple facilities that are no longer in use or needed. This management plan will be used as a template for other Conservation lands. Staff will consult with Municipalities on these plans and will include any surplus buildings/ structures identified.

BD-19-158

Bruzewicz – Brown

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated November 1, 2019 regarding Conservation Area surplus lands, where no lands have been identified as surplus through this initial review.”

CARRIED

The McKeough Upstream lands were acquired through expropriation for the purpose of flooding during the operation of the W. Darcy McKeough Dam. At the time of construction, landowners upstream were given the option to allow a flood easement on their land with a one-time payment, sell the portion of their land that will be flooded, or sell the entire property.

Therefore, when viewing the location map there are gaps between the lands that the SCRCA owns, based on the decision of the owner at the time.

The McKeough Dam and floodway were constructed as a joint project with the Province, Municipalities, and the SCRCA. The Province contributed 90% to 100% of the funds to purchase the easements and/or lands.

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- (a) The disposition is for provincial or municipal infrastructure and utility purposes;
- (b) The province, the provincial agency, board or commission affected by the disposition or the municipal government, agency, board or commission affected by the disposition has approved it; and
- (c) The authority informs the Minister of the disposition. 2010, c. 16, Sched. 10, s. 1

Terms and conditions

(3) The Minister may impose terms and conditions on an approval given under subsection (2), including a condition that the authority pay a specified share of the proceeds of the disposition to the Minister. 1996, c. 1, Sched. M, s. 44 (3).

The lands have been reviewed under the following criteria:

- Is the land impacted by operations of the McKeough Dam?
- Is the unaffected portion of local, provincial or global significance?
- Is the land woodland or agricultural?
- Is the land revenue generating?
- If required, can the land be severed, and still be of interest to a buyer?

Strategic Objectives(s):

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

Because what we do on land is reflected in our water and ecosystems, the SCRCA develops and implements programs that protect our land resources and promote watershed stewardship practices that lead to healthy, sustainable communities and industries.

Management of Authority Owned Lands: Through the completion of Property Management Plans, the Authority continues to manage its lands to balance revenue production and effective management of woodlands, wetlands and biodiversity.

Goal 3 – Provide recreation and education opportunities for the public to enjoy and learn from our natural environment

Through the lands we manage and own, as well as the educational programs we deliver, the SCRCA provides opportunities for our communities to understand and appreciate the value of their natural environment as well as the social and economic benefits of protecting that environment.

Conservation Lands: The St. Clair Region Conservation Authority and its Foundation own more than 2,100 hectares of land including beaches along Lake Huron, campgrounds, day use parks, wetlands, forests, floodplains, and farmland. A wide range of recreation activities are available on these lands including swimming, boating, hiking, bird watching, camping, fishing, and hunting.

Financial Impact:

As the majority of the lands are marginal and not considered A1 or A2 agriculture land, the appraised value will be on the low end of the market value range.

The Province, under its jurisdiction, may in fact keep the majority, if not all of the revenue generated by the sale of any lands.

Staff will continue to look at cost saving opportunities for land management.

BD-19-159

MacKinnon – Nemcek

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated October 28, 2019 regarding the review of the McKeough upstream lands and further accepts that such lands are found to be self-sustaining and generating revenue that after expenses, contributes to the annual budget.”

CARRIED

- Current flood threat is moderate to high as water levels remain elevated into floodplains in some locations
- With already high water levels forecasted to exceed record highs in early 2020, the upcoming spring freshet is anticipated as being a very high flood threat
- Significant rainfall in October greatly surpassed monthly normals and triggered widespread flooding throughout the region

Flood Threat

Locations across the watershed have received upwards of 200 mm of rain in the last two weeks. By the evening of October 31st, some locations had received 125 mm of rain within a 48 hour period, resulting in water levels rising quickly into floodplain areas and over roads. Conditions for operating the McKeough Dam had been met and the gates were closed at 8:45 pm on October 31st. As conditions began to settle, the procedure for

opening the gates began November 1st and the gates were completely open by the evening of November 3rd.

As of this report, water levels remain elevated and in some cases are still over the bank and into floodplain areas or over roads. Winds from a westerly direction continue to slow the movement of water out of the Sydenham River and are contributing to the high water levels in Wallaceburg. While no significant precipitation is in the forecast, the flood threat is moderate to high due to the river levels remaining high.

Given that the surrounding lake levels are also high and are predicted to rise further, surpassing the 1986 record levels, the risk of moderate to severe flood condition in the spring freshet is anticipated for 2020.

Precipitation Conditions

- Precipitation was substantially higher in October compared to the normal values for all regions
- Windsor has been below normal values for the past year, whereas all other regions are either at or above normal values

Great Lakes Levels

A Comparison of Great Lakes water levels for September 2019 was reviewed (Sourced from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2019)

- Water levels remain high, surpassing average for the past decade
- Average levels for the month of September surpassed the 1986 all-time-high for Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie
- Water levels are forecasted to fall from the September levels

Recorded and projected water levels for Lake Huron and Lake St. Clair were reviewed. (Sourced from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2019)

- Water levels on Lake St. Clair are modeled to rise in December and surpass all-time-high levels for the first few months of 2020
- Lake Huron water levels are anticipated to fall from September levels, however surpass record levels in early 2020

BD-19-160

Miller – Kennes

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated November 1, 2019 on the current watershed conditions and Great Lakes water levels.”

CARRIED

Status Update: Phase II

- SCRCA and City of Sarnia staff are working to maximize funds received through a recent DMAF grant

- Tenders will be advertised for this phase of the project on September 2019.
- Tenders closed on October 3rd, 2019
- Seven tenders were submitted. Total tender prices vary from \$890,111.17 to \$1,283,273.20 (including HST).
- Cope Construction has been awarded this work.
- Construction is expected to begin December, 2019
- Awaiting permits from DFO and other agencies

Director’s Comments:

A written statement was requested confirming SCRCA’s opinion on the importance and need for shoreline erosion control and the protection of infrastructure. Directors and staff discussed the merits and disadvantages of off-shore erosion barriers, which have been found to be financially prohibitive.

BD-19-161

Burrell – Kennes

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated October 31, 2019 on the Bright Grove, Kenwick to Helen Avenue shoreline improvements Phase 2.”

CARRIED

The Healthy Watershed Program have restored or enhanced over 1,000 ha of land, and over 2.3 million trees planted throughout the region. These projects, along with our outreach and education events aim to minimize non-point source sedimentation, nutrient loading, and thermal changes of water bodies within our watershed.

Strategic Objective(s):

The Healthy Watershed Program fulfills Goal 2 of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority strategic objectives; Protect, manage, and restore our natural systems including woodlands, wetlands, waterways, and lakes. The objective is being achieved through the strategic action; Develop new tools to promote stewardship practices and evaluate the effectiveness of Best Management Practices and Focus on Programs to Reduce Phosphorous Loading into the Great Lakes:

Financial Impact:

The Healthy Watershed Program is funded by grants, landowner contribution and corporate donations. Since its beginnings the program has distributed more than \$1.9 million in grants to landowners, which has resulted in over 550 projects (total project cost nearly \$5.75 million).

Update:

#TDTreeDays in Strathroy and Sarnia – September 28 and October 26

We are amazed at how many community volunteers participate in these events! For the three events, over 100 people attended! As always, our Strathroy event had great representation from the local Scouts and Guides. Between the two events, 400 native trees were planted. Sarnia Councillor Dave Boushy spoke some words of encouragement to the volunteers at the Mike Weir Park location. Funding from TD Friends of the Environment makes these events possible in our watershed each year.

Forest Fall Fair – September 20-22

As always, our snakes and turtles attracted a crowd at the Forest Fall Fair. This year, staff also included our new Invasive *Phragmites* Display. These informational panels aim to provide identification and management tips for rural landowners. Over 250 people stopped by the booth over the weekend and staff shared information on farm best management practices, conservation areas, and actions individuals can do to improve water quality.

Middlesex Clean Water Program

This program was reinstated in the spring of 2019 (with municipal funding support) and provides Middlesex landowners with funding for eligible and approved water quality improving best management practices. Staff presented four projects to the committee, three of them being livestock restriction fencing and a clean water diversion project. Funding was accepted for one of the three livestock restriction fencing projects. Clean water diversion project was deferred for funding until the next committee meeting.

Staff are continuing site visits with local landowners. Many are interested in wetlands and erosion control measures.

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.

Upcoming Events

Staff are hard at work putting together a number of workshops and a conference focusing on Soil Health during the winter months. Check back here for more information soon!

November 20 – The value of wetlands on marginal farmland

February 12 (Tentative date) – location TBD – Soil Health Conference highlighting local farmers and best management practices that can be implemented to improve soil health and reduce nutrient loss on farms.

December 11 – Soil Health Workshop Fertilizer Management & Understanding Your Soil Tests

March 11 - Soil Health Workshop – specific topic TBD.

BD-19-162

Bruziewicz – Burrell

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the status report dated October 29, 2019, regarding the Healthy Watershed Program, including the outreach and education events held throughout the watershed as well as an update on the Walk the Watershed Program.”

CARRIED

The Province has established the Species at Risk Stewardship Fund to enhance stewardship resources and efforts and stimulate investment in species at risk protection and recovery. Through the Species at Risk Stewardship Fund, the Province intends to provide grants to individuals and organizations for projects, which improve the status of species at risk and their habitats throughout Ontario.

With this funding, St. Clair Region Conservation Authority’s recovery efforts focus on the Spiny Softshell Turtle and the Eastern Foxsnake as part of our Reptiles at Risk Program. This program has been ongoing for over a decade and has seen a consistent increase in success. However, since this is a grant-funded program, funding is re-applied for at the end of each grant cycle. Since we are near the end of a two-year grant, the future of the program is currently unknown.

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 up listed to Endangered in 2016. Population sizes are small and declining, the total number of mature individuals in Ontario is estimated to be 1000 and continues to decline, with a 45% decline across the three largest nest locations in Canada (COSEWIC, 2017).

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 of the oxygen they require by breathing through their skin while in water, which allows them to hide under water for up to five hours.

The primary threats to this species 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 due to 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, and
- 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. Daily movements exceeding 4 kilometres have been observed which 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.

The program consists of the preparation of nesting habitat sites, and the collection, incubation, and release of Spiny Softshell turtles (*Apalone spinifera*). Before nesting season begins, communal nesting sites are prepared with the removal of vegetation growing throughout the site and the addition of fresh sand and gravel substrate. Everyday during nesting season, the Biology team visits the nesting sites and collects eggs that are in immediate danger of high waters or predation. These collected nests are placed in incubation with assistance of Salthaven Wildlife & Education Centre. Once hatched, the turtles are monitored for a short amount of time to ensure they are healthy, they are re-released in a slow-water, sheltered areas near the original nesting site.

Thus far, in 2019, 785 turtle hatchlings have been released, including 257 Spiny Softshell, 268 Northern Map Turtles, 247 Snapping Turtles and 13 Midland Painted Turtles. These numbers show an increase of 45 individuals from 2018, to date this is the most successful year.

Snakes

We have also continued our snake monitoring and rehabilitation initiatives with focus on the recovery of the endangered Eastern Foxsnake. 'Endangered', by definition, refers to a wildlife species that is facing imminent extirpation or extinction. The Eastern Foxsnake, is the second largest snake found in Ontario, reaching lengths of up to 1.7 metres. They have a distinct reddish/copper 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 meets dry vegetation, makes a buzzing or "rattling" sound. Eastern Foxsnakes have a very restricted global distribution, with about 70 percent of their entire range occurring in Ontario, 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 has focused on a number of efforts including:

- **Artificial Nesting Boxes**

These structures help to protect eggs from predators and create ideal conditions for gravid females to lay their eggs. There are currently nine nesting boxes situated on SCRCA lands and another five have been installed on private landowner properties. The nesting boxes are installed in early spring and are then sorted through and checked in the fall for remnants of eggs and nesting activity.

- **Coverboard Monitoring**

Coverboards are sheets of plywood laid on the ground in order to provide protection and create an insulated heat source for snakes, which are attracted to the underside of the board. Coverboard transects are situated in a line at an equal distance between each board on North facing slopes in order to attract the most sunlight. Monitoring is completed by quickly flipping the coverboard to reveal any snakes hidden underneath. When a snake is present, it is captured, identified to species and photographed. All of these values as well as location, time of day, weather, and a variety of others variables are recorded and shared with Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry for long-term monitoring.

This year SCRCA collaborated with Ontario Nature to continue the Long Term Monitoring Protocol to assess population trends in Ontario snakes over time. This protocol outlined specific variables in which surveys should take place including weather conditions, survey times and duration, coverboard size, coverboard placement and required equipment. Two new transects were set up on SCRCA properties following the new protocol. Within two weeks of surveying, multiple snakes were found, which ultimately led to the decision to reorganize the original coverboard transects present throughout the McKeough Floodway that were being used for SCRCA own Foxsnake sampling. Sampling took place for 8 weeks and numerous species were found including Eastern Foxsnake, Eastern Gartersnake and Butlers Gartersnake. This data will be shared with Ontario Nature and all coverboard transects will remain in the same location for next season.

- **Identification of Individual specimens**

The 2019 field season marked the first year SCRCA implemented a platform to identify individual Fox Snakes using a photograph catalogue. The 'blotch' style markings on the snakes are unique to individuals and subsequently can be used to identify an individual. A database has been created incorporating data from many years of surveying, this can assist in tracking which snakes are using the artificial nest boxes.

Reptile Program Education and Outreach:

- Third Annual Turtle Birthday Party at AW Campbell CA, August 16

Approximately 50 participants attended this year's Turtle Birthday Party to learn about SCRCA's Reptile at Risk Program. A short presentation was given outlining the program and general information on Ontario's turtle species, followed by a number of related activities and refreshments. The highlight of the day for most was the special appearance made by three different hatchling species!

- **Species at Risk Newsletter**

The Species at Risk Newsletter is awaiting distribution to approximately 65,000 residents. The 2019 Newsletter focuses on Mussel Research as well as turtle and snake articles related to the Reptiles at Risk Program. It is predicted that the newsletter be distributed by the middle of September.

Conclusion:

The Species at Risk Stewardship Fund has created a number of opportunities for ongoing recovery efforts of two of the Sydenham's Reptile Species at Risk. Valuable partnerships have been created with other organizations and have closed knowledge gaps regarding monitoring surveys and stewardship efforts. Although the program has succeeded with every year that passes, it has also allowed for progression and growth in upcoming years. SCRCA hopes to be able to own in-house incubators for turtle eggs in years to come. The biology team will be working on a new design for the artificial snake nesting boxes, photographing captured snakes to identify individuals and continuing with the cover board monitoring while following the Long Term Monitoring Protocol.

Strategic Objectives:

Goal 2:

"Protect, manage, and restore our natural systems including woodlands, wetlands, waterways, and lakes."

Strategic Actions: Reptile Species at Risk: The objective of the Reptiles at Risk program is to encourage good stewardship for snakes and turtles in the St. Clair Region. Program activities include tracking occurrences, protecting and improving habitat on Authority and Foundation owned lands, and encouraging local community members to take similar actions.

Financial Impact: This program is funded by the Species at Risk Stewardship Fund. All deliverables of this two-year grant will be completed in February 2020. The Species at Risk Stewardship Fund usually opens for applications in the fall. There have been no calls for proposals to-date. The future of this program is currently unknown.

Concern from developers. Reflects back on CA. Ministry should be enforcing this, not us. Why should the CA take the heat? Brian submitted letter saying it's a recommendation.

BD-19-163

Miller – Kennes

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated October 31, 2019, on the Reptiles at Risk Program Update, including highlights of recent collection, incubation and release of Spiny Softshell turtles and snake monitoring.”

CARRIED

Through financial support 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 Watershed to reduce the impact of this nutrient on the Great Lakes basin and improve the health of the local ecosystem. Phosphorus is essential to life but when it 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 is to coordinate with local stakeholders, First Nations, and community members to identify sources of phosphorus and determine best-value solutions for our region. A community engagement and outreach strategy will be developed to implement the Management Plan.

Progress since June 2019 board report:

Date	Item	Details
Summer 2019	SCRCA Project Team Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff conducting/compiling research and collecting data based on direction from committees• Staff drafting reports that will provide the basis for chapter content• Staff attended local rural water quality events• Staff participating on the Lake Erie Action Plan Implementation Committee• Staff reached out to local First Nations representatives to form the First Nations Engagement Committee• Staff finalized membership on the Advisory Committee
October 10, 2019	First Nations Engagement Committee Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduced project to committee members, invite participation on other committees;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented information that is currently known; • Reviewed proposed Project Charter, Terms of Reference, Project Outline; • Received feedback and direction
October 23, 2019	<p>Advisory Committee/Technical Team Meeting</p> <p>Board Representative present: Terry Burrell</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced project to committee members; • Reviewed proposed Project Charter, Terms of Reference, Project Outline; • Presented information that is currently known; • Presentations from local researchers/experts • Brought forward technical questions that have arisen from research and committee discussions to receive direction from Technical Team • Received feedback and direction

The SCRCA Project Team is compiling feedback from the committee meetings and one-on-one discussions with committee members to direct ongoing research. This information is being investigated, discussed at meetings, and incorporated into the draft Management Plan.

Upcoming committee meetings:

- Point Source Working Group Meeting
- Non-Point Source Working Group Meeting

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.”

Financial Impact:

Staff have finalized a work plan and signed a three-year contribution agreement with ECCC totaling \$220,000 covering 2019-2022 which will support the development of the Sydenham Watershed Phosphorus Management Plan.

BD-19-164

Burrell – Stark

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the status report dated October 29, 2019, regarding Environment and Climate Change Canada funding for a Sydenham Watershed Management Plan.”

CARRIED

Seed Collection Program

- The annual seed collection program was successful this year with staff collecting more than 2,800 litres (70 bushels) of tree seed within the SCRCA watershed. This ensures that trees planted in the SCRCA watershed are genetically indigenous to the region for the health of our future forests.
- All seed collected (mainly oak, hickory and walnut) was shipped to the tree nursery where most of SCRCA's deciduous trees are grown and are purchased for the tree planting/afforestation program. This year's tree seed will become seedling trees for the 2021 and 2022 program.

Tree Planting Program

- Staff are currently busy with landowner site visits for the 2020 spring tree planting program. Approximately 60,000 trees are on order and secured with tree nurseries for next years program.
- Subsidies to reduce the cost of trees and planting for landowners are what keeps this program running. The cancellation of the 50 Million Tree Program (grant program) from the province still continues to be a concern. The federal government has committed to keeping the program going for 2020 with the possibility of extending funding until 2023. This is very good news, however the subsidy is less than it was through the province, therefore more top up funding will be essential, possibly requiring some conservation services reserves to make up the short fall as we move forward and until provincial environmental grant programs become more reliable.

Vegetation Management Program

- Most of the trees planted under the spring tree program in years 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 require follow up vegetation control by way of fall herbicide application. A non-selective herbicide is used to kill difficult perennial competition. October and November is the treatment time frame after the tree seedlings go into dormancy.
- Approximately 250,000 trees on more than 130 individual properties will be sprayed over a 6 to 8 week period by staff this fall (weather dependent). A spring pre-emergent herbicide will then be applied next year.

Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP)

- Landowner inquires for managed forest tax plans are starting to come in early this year.
- MFTIP plans for the 2021 tax year must be approved and submitted by the June 30th, 2020. Plans are usually written by the plan approver with input from the landowner
- MPAC adjusts property taxes on the managed forested portion of the property equal to agricultural tax rates. Non-farm rural forests are currently taxed at residential rates.

Waste Management Twin Creek Landfill

- Work continues with Waste Management's Twin Creeks landfill north of Watford. Approximately 220 large stock trees were planted on the 2 km long screening berm along Zion Line and Nauvoo Road. These are replacement trees for some of the trees that did not survive when planted in 2011. There were originally more than 2000 large stock trees planted.
- We also continue to work on tending maintenance operations to the 50,000 poplar trees planted on the landfill cap. The poplar trees are used to reduce water population from landfill leachate. Diluted leachate is pumped to the trees rather than

treating it and discharging the treated water to a sanitary sewer or water body.

**Regarding BD-19-53
Large Stock Tree Planting programs**

- SCRCA has been purchasing and providing larger stock potted and bare root trees to landowners and municipalities since the 1990's.
- Historically, most municipalities have purchased trees on an as needed basis.
- More recently, the large stock program has evolved into one which has more native tree species available as well as trees grown from more regional seed sources.
- Currently there is one municipality purchasing trees annually and one municipality that started doing the same in 2019.
- SCRCA provides a list of tree species, sizes and prices to municipalities each January. Municipalities then submit a list of quantities they wish to purchase by the March 1st deadline. SCRCA then submits a bulk order to the tree nursery(s).
- SCRCA purchases the trees at wholesale cost, ships the trees to the storage facility in Strathroy-Caradoc and makes arrangements with each municipality to pick up the trees on a specific day(s). SCRCA invoices each municipality for the cost of the trees. The two participating municipalities provide a subsidized price to landowners who purchase and plants the trees on their property located within the municipality.

BD-19-165

Burrell – Nemcek

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated November 1, 2019 on the Conservation Services programs and projects across the watershed as well an overview of the Large Stock Tree Planting program.”

CARRIED

The Regulations Activity Report for the period September 1 to 30, 2019 was reviewed.

BD-19-166

McMillan – Burrell

“That the Board of Directors accepts the Regulations Activity Reports on *“Development, Interference with Wetlands & Alterations to Shorelines & Watercourses”* Regulations (Ontario Regulation 171/06), dated October 10, 2019 and includes the period September 1 to 30, 2019 as presented.”

CARRIED

The monthly Planning Activity Summary report for the period of September 1 to 30, 2019 was reviewed.

BD-19-167

Brown – Brennan

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority’s monthly Planning Activity Summary Reports dated October 10, 2019, for the period of September 1 to 30, 2019.”

CARRIED

Highlights:

- Duplication of duties was not identified as an issue or a concern by watershed planners.
- No redundancy in tasks completed by SCRCA staff for planning applications was identified by watershed planners.
- Improved communication will benefit processes on the part of all parties.
- Updated memorandum(s) of understanding (MOU) will provide opportunity to: clarify roles and each organizations responsibilities, improve process, educate and inform all parties and the public.
- All watershed planners identified the need for the SCRCA’s natural heritage commenting service. This expertise is not available at any of the planning offices in the region and is costly to be acquired from the private sector.

Reason for the Conference Call

During the October 17, 2019, SCRCA Board of Directors meeting, questions were brought up regarding possible duplication of effort and redundancy in providing comments and charging fees for municipal planning applications. Further to this, the SCRCA Board of Directors requested a report at the November 14, 2019 meeting, providing an update on meetings undertaken with county and municipal planning staff regarding redundancies and duplications within the SCRCA planning services.

In order to prepare this report, the SCRCA hosted 5 separate conference calls with the directors/managers of planning in our 4 regions – Sarnia, Chatham-Kent, Lambton, & Middlesex. The SCRCA requested that the directors/managers review the proposed agenda items for the conference call, coordinate with planning staff, and invite any planning staff they wish to have on the call, and to provide any identified concerns or other issues with the SCRCA planning services. Also on the calls were SCRCA Chair, Joe Faas, SCRCA Vice-Chair, Larry Gordon, General Manager, Brian McDougall, Manager of Planning, Dallas Cundick and Planner, Erica Ogden.

The SCRCA also used this opportunity for a brief introductory discussion on updates to MOU(s) for planning services between the SCRCA and each of the region’s, and to review the draft planning fees as accepted by the board at their September meeting.

Discussion on SCRCA Roles – Planning – Plan Input and Review

A summary of SCRCA's role in plan input and review was provided which includes the role as: an agency with provincial delegation (natural hazards), a municipal technical advisor (natural heritage), a public body, a watershed-based resource management agency, and a landowner.

From the watershed planner's perspective, the roles of the SCRCA are well understood. The Municipality/County/City relies on the SCRCA for expertise in natural hazards and natural heritage, as that level of expertise is not available in house.

Discussion on Identified Concerns

No duplication or redundancy identified. The SCRCA is not doing the same work as the Municipality/County/City, specific roles as per above are clear and well understood by watershed planners. Overall, it was discussed that the Municipality/County/City and the SCRCA planning services have a good working relationship.

An opportunity exists to update all MOU(s) between the regions and the SCRCA for planning services, and especially where an updated active MOU does not currently exist (Middlesex, Chatham-Kent, Sarnia). Working together through the process and updates to the MOU(s) would assist in strengthening relationships, further clarify roles, and allow improvements to timing and process (application management).

From the development community and public perspective there is at times confusion regarding the SCRCA's role. Educational outreach to the public about the SCRCA's role in planning could be beneficial, outside the context of a specific application. Plain language where appropriate should be used to present information clearly.

The proposed 2020 fee schedule was circulated for review. No comments regarding duplication of fees, or fees in comparison to municipal fees were raised. Improvements to the process for fee collection were raised, recognizing the need to collect fees and receive comments quickly. Opportunities to simplify and improve fee collection, including through updates and/or amendments to the MOU, should be explored.

Pre-consultation was identified as a very important part of the planning process, to provide potential applicants with upfront information about the future requirements and introduce the role of the SCRCA. The option for preliminary discussions without the payment of a fee was identified to avoid potential hindrances to the application process.

Various levels of fees charged based on the type of applicant was discussed, including fees charged to municipalities. When the Conservation Authority took on natural heritage commenting on behalf of municipalities (2015), no additional funding through levy was provided. In 2017, The SCRCA Board of Director's passed a motion directing

that the costs for natural heritage services be paid for through user fees including municipally driven projects. If additional funding through levy is provided to support the natural heritage program, fees for municipally driven projects for natural heritage services could be reviewed.

In addition to the above understood roles, the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc would also like to work with the SCRCA as an active partner in projects in the community as it continues to grow, working towards common goals, where the SCRCA can act in a leadership role in addition to providing technical expertise. Focus on the collaborative partnership, not just a regulatory role. The SCRCA has an important role to play and the Municipality would like to look for ways to partner to address natural hazard and natural heritage issues in the broader context of the community. Focusing on ways to reach end goals through improved relationships. The Conservation Areas are seen as an asset in the community which should be protected and made accessible. Encourage public education and improve perception that the Municipality and SCRCA share common goals. Future master plans for the Conservation Areas are proposed and would be a good joint project.

Specific Planning Application Processes and Improvements Discussed;

- Tweaks in process related items such as fees, pre-consultation and timelines can be addressed through the MOU(s).
- Recommend clarification of some of the terminology in the fee schedule to be more consistent with language used by the City/County/Municipality.
- Further clarification on the distinction between major and minor applications would be beneficial, and to look at ways to simplify the fee schedule.
- Continue/expand communication before the application is circulated to screen in advance and determine the need for SCRCA comments.
 - Shoreline development immediately adjacent to the natural hazards.
 - Surplus farm dwelling severances with limited regulated area.
- Plain language where appropriate should be used to present information clearly.
- Pre-application meeting processes vary throughout the watershed. As a practice, the SCRCA is invited to attend pre-application meetings and proponents are informed regarding the Authority's role in the process.
- City of Sarnia has shifted to a regularly scheduled monthly meeting date for all pre-consultation meetings, with SCRCA staff invited to attend (in person or conference call based on application).

Strategic Objectives(s):

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

Goal 4 – Build a stronger and more valued organization through business excellence

A presentation was provided by Dallas Cundick, Manager of Planning and Regulations.

Director's Comments:

Dissatisfaction was expressed that not all of the member Municipalities were consulted. Due to time constraints and the limited availability of the Chair and Vice-Chair, SCRCA was not able to meet with all, but instead sought feedback from the 4 regions within the watershed: Sarnia, Chatham-Kent, Lambton and Middlesex. Staff are directed to contact each Municipality to discuss potential duplications or redundancies within our planning services.

BD-19-168

Marriott – Schenk

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report on Plan Input and Review - Unnecessary Duplication and Redundancy Discussions, with Planners and Planning Managers, and further acknowledges the following highlights from these discussions as described in the report handed out in today’s meeting.”

CARRIED

The statement of Revenue and Expenditure to September 30, 2019 was reviewed.

Director's Comments:

A request was made to consider displaying revenues and expenditures in a monthly or quarterly format in order to provide better clarity on the budget.

BD-19-169

Kennes – Brennan

“That the Board of Directors requests that a report is submitted to the December meeting regarding the possibility of providing monthly or quarterly revenue and expenditures for closer monitoring of the budget to date.”

CARRIED

BD-19-170

Kennes – Brennan

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the revenue and expenditure report to September 30, 2019, as it relates to the budget.”

CARRIED

The September to October 31, 2019 disbursements were reviewed.

BD-19-171

Brown – Schenk

“That the Board of Directors approves the September to October 31, 2019 disbursements as presented in the amount of \$749,226.38.”

CARRIED

The status report on the 2019 general levy receipts to October 31, 2019 was reviewed.

BD-19-172

Miller – MacKinnon

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the status report on the 2019 general levy receipts to October 31, 2019.”

CARRIED

Investment reports for the period ending September 30, 2019 were reviewed.

BD-19-173

Kennes – Burrell

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the Investment Report, for the period ending September 30, 2019.”

CARRIED

The SCRCA 2020 draft fees were reviewed.

Director’s Comments:

Directors requested justification for increases to fees. SCRCA staff explained that increased fees were needed not only to meet the cost recovery model, but also to fall in line with neighbouring Conservation Authorities and Municipalities. It was confirmed that fee increases were factored into the proposed 2020 budget. A motion was made to freeze all fees with the exception of camping fees. A recorded vote was requested.

Recorded vote RE: BD-19-174

Director	For	Against
MacKinnon, Betty Ann		✓
Nemcek, Frank	✓	
Faas, Joe		✓
McGregor, Carmen (Regrets)	-	-
Broad, Al		✓
Marriott, Kevin	✓	
Scott, Lorie (Regrets)	-	-
McMillan, Dan		✓
Loosley, Brad	✓	
Schenk, Ron		✓
Gordon, Larry (Regrets)	-	-
Bruziewicz, Andy		✓
Burrell, Terry		✓
Stark, Mike	✓	
McGill, Mark		✓
Brown, Pat		✓
Miller, Steve		✓
Brennan, John		✓
Kennes, Frank		✓
Westgate, Jerry (Regrets)	-	-
Totals	4	12

BD-19-174

Loosely – Stark

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the reports on Conservation Area and Planning fees and directs that fees for all programs and services, with the exception of camping fees, be frozen at the current rates for the year 2020.”

FAILED

BD-19-175

Burrell – Kennes

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the reports on Conservation Area and Planning fees and approves the Schedule of Fees dated October 2019, for all programs and services for the year 2020 fees and further directs staff to circulate the approved fee schedule to all member municipalities.”

CARRIED

BD-19-176

Loosley – Brennan

“That the Board of Directors lifts Motion BD-19-150 from the table.”

CARRIED

Director’s Comments:

Directors share concern that approval of the preliminary draft budget may be perceived as supportive of the increase. Directors request a clear breakdown of proposed levy increases as well as justification for each program to be included in mandatory program table.

BD-19-177

Schenk – Miller

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the 2020 preliminary draft budget of \$8,621,792.21 with a proposed municipal general levy of \$1,069,926 and further that this preliminary budget will be circulated to member municipalities for information and input based on our budget review process.”

CARRIED

Minutes of the July 22, 2019 Joint Health and Safety Committee meeting were reviewed.

BD-19-178

Burrell – McMillan

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the July 22, 2019 meeting minutes of Joint Health and Safety Committee.”

CARRIED

BD-19-179

Loosley – Kennes

“That the 2020 Nominating Committee consisting of the following four directors representing the four districts of the Authority being Sarnia, Lambton, Chatham-Kent, and Middlesex be: Terry Burrell, Ron Schenk, Carmen McGregor, Betty Ann MacKinnon and further that the Nominating Committee’s recommendation for the 2020 committee membership be presented at the Annual General Meeting.”

CARRIED

The proposed 2020 schedule of meetings was reviewed.

BD-19-180

Schenk – MacKinnon

“That the Board of Directors approves the 2020 tentative schedule of meetings for the Board of Directors and Committees, dated October 31, 2019.”

CARRIED

Memorial Forest Dedications

Memorial forest dedication services were held on September 15th and September 22nd this past fall.

Denning’s Chatham-Kent and West Elgin Memorial Forest Dedication:

The 3rd annual Denning’s Chatham-Kent and West Elgin Memorial Forest dedication was held on Sunday, September 15th at the Keith McLean Conservation Lands. Tree planting and conservation education are supported through donations made to the Foundation in recognition of families served by the Chatham-Kent and West Elgin Denning Funeral Home branches.

Approximately 95 people attended the service. Duncan Skinner brought remarks on behalf of the Foundation. A red oak tree was planted as a symbol of the trees that will be planted through the Authority’s forestry programs and all the children that will take part in conservation education programs.

Foundation Memorial Forest Dedication

The Foundation Memorial Forest Dedication was held on Sunday, September 22nd at the Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area in Petrolia, Ontario. Duncan Skinner and Joe Faas provided remarks on behalf of the Foundation and Authority, respectively. Seventy people attended the dedication where a tulip tree was planted as a symbol of all the trees planted through donations to the Foundation. From September 2018 to August 2019, 47 trees were dedicated through individual donations to the program. To date, a total of 2142 trees have been dedicated through the Foundation’s Memorial Forest Program.

Conservation Awards

A list of possible conservation award recipients will be brought forward at our Board meeting in December. Board members wishing to nominate any individual or organization should contact Brian McDougall or Donna Blue at the SCRCA Administration Office.

St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation

The St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation raises funds to support the work of the Conservation Authority. At the October 17th meeting, the Foundation approved support for a number of projects and programs:

- \$3660 to support the purchase of two Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) for the A.W. Campbell Conservation Area and the SCRCA Administration Building.
- \$10,000 to support two intern positions
- \$60,000 to support Conservation Education

Conservation Education Fundraising

One of the main Authority programs supported by the Foundation is Conservation Education. Efforts are made to secure funds from corporate sponsors, special events and the BINGO program. Additionally, the Conservation Authority applies for government grants to support the education program. Current support efforts include:

Sarnia-Lambton Environmental Association (SLEA)

A request has been submitted to the SLEA Board of Directors to continue funding the “River Bottom Critters” and the “Go with the Flow” conservation education programs in 2020. The \$30,000 request is currently being reviewed with confirmation expected in the next couple of months. The “River Bottom Critters” program is targeted at grades JK-12 and the “Go with the Flow” program is offered to students in grades JK-8.

Plains Midstream Canada

The SCRCA has received email confirmation that Plains Midstream Canada will continue to support the “Spring Water Awareness” program delivered to elementary students (JK to Grade 6) for the next three years (\$5,000 annually until 2022). This program is offered in March every year and teaches children about the hazards and dangers associated with spring snow and ice melt along streams and rivers.

Friends of the St. Clair River (FOSCR)

The Friends of the St. Clair River community group have once again committed \$2,500

towards delivering the “River RAP” and new “Phosphorus 101” education programs to both elementary and secondary school students throughout the 2019-2020 school year.
Government of Canada

Through the Habitat Stewardship Program (Department of Fisheries and Oceans) and Canadian Nature Fund (Environment and Climate Change Canada) applications submitted by the SCRCA biology department, \$27,500 has been secured towards conservation education until March 2020. This funding will support the “Aquatic Species at Risk” in-class program offered to elementary and secondary students, along with the development of a program that pairs Indigenous and non-Indigenous-based science to teach students about aquatic habitat, Species at Risk and environmental stewardship.

Enbridge

Through a generous \$5,000 donation by Enbridge, improvements will be made at the Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area that will benefit both students and campers. These improvements will include: 1) construction of a pond edge boardwalk, 2) a dedicated roadside walkway and 3) a trail-stabilizing retaining wall. In addition, a new application to Enbridge will be submitted shortly that requests support for delivery of education programs at Peers Wetland.

Strategic Objectives(s):

Goal 3 – Provide recreation and education opportunities for the public to enjoy and learn from our natural environment.

BD-19-181

Burrell – MacKinnon

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the Communications Report dated October 22, 2019 including memorial forests, conservation awards, Conservation Foundation update and conservation education fundraising.”

CARRIED

Fall Education Programs

Labour issues within the local School Boards have been a factor in slightly reduced program bookings this fall. Minor openings in the schedule have provided staff with the opportunity to perform program maintenance. Outdoor Education Funding is continuing through the Ministry of Education. Teachers can apply for \$7.00 per student to be put towards the cost of our field trips.

Program Flyer for Teachers

Elementary and Secondary Flyers have been distributed to the St. Clair Catholic District School Board, private schools and Middlesex Schools in our watershed. The LKDSB has begun distribution of e-flyers only. All flyer requests must now be approved through

an on-line portal before the School Principals will have access to them. The Secondary Flyer was approved by the LKDSB in early October, however the elementary flyer was not approved until October 25th due to a number of issues within the process.

Geocaching Events

Sunday Sept. 15 – Over 50 people were in attendance from as far away as Michigan, Windsor and London. Two families who were new to geocaching attended and enjoyed learning about this opportunity to explore different conservation areas. Our local bird species were highlighted as the new caches were named after birds found in our watershed. These geocaches will remain in place until next year's event.

Lambton Upland Game Bird Club Youth Day

August 17th, 2019 – SCRCA staff provided children with nature-based conservation activities in this annual youth day hosted by the Lambton Upland Game Bird Club Chapter. Connections were made between collected insects and the ecology of farming, fishing, best management practices, and general ecosystem support.

Wyoming Fair and Forest Fair - Agriculture in the Classroom

September 10th and September 13th, 2019 respectively – Staff attended both fairs to bring a conservation message to the attending students. Specifically, the students learned about freshwater mussels found in our watershed's rivers, creeks and ditches; focusing on the connection between responsible farming practices and the health of our aquatic species. Students learned about mussel identification and were encouraged to 'raccoon' for mussels in our model 'creek'. It was a great hands-on experience for all students!

Brigden Fair - Agriculture in the Classroom

October 11th, 2019 – SCRCA education staff provided an educational display with hands-on activities for approximately 800 students in grades 3-6. Staff discussed the importance of wetlands with the use of a metaphor activity improved students' understanding of our connection to wetlands.

Reptiles at Risk Education Day

September 24th, 2019 – Education staff partnered with Biology staff to offer this annual education experience for grade 12 students in our watershed. Students from Great Lakes Secondary School visited Perch Creek to learn about Reptiles at Risk, and the habitats they depend upon.

AFSAR Education Days - Hillside School Kettle Point

October 9th and November 13th – As part of our annual education days at the Kettle and Stoney Point First Nation School, students in grade 3 and grade 4 participate in an outdoor and indoor education day with 3 SCRCA staff. During the ‘outdoor visit, students are taken to a nearby creek to look at life supported there. The indoor day focuses on Species at Risk in Kettle and Stony Point, encouraging the kids to share their own experiences and learn new ideas through games, maps and conversation.

Canadian Nature Fund Program Expansion

October 11th and November 14th, 2019 (monthly visits will continue until June 2020) SCRCA and Hillside School at Kettle and Stony Point First Nation have begun program development and delivery as part of a program expansion project funded by the Canadian Nature Fund. SCRCA Education staff are working with Ojibwe teaching staff at Hillside School to add a conservation message to their existing land-based Ojibwe program. More specifically, the SCRCA is encouraging students to consider local ‘Aquatic Species at Risk’, the habitats that sustain them and potential stewardship projects to protect them.

Strategic Objectives(s):

Goal 3 – Provide recreation and education opportunities for the public to enjoy and learn from our natural environment.

BD-182

Miller – Burrell

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the Conservation Education Report, dated October 31, 2019 including fall education programs and events.”

CARRIED

Under New Business

An opinion article written by a Plympton-Wyoming resident and published by the Sarnia Journal on November 10, 2019 was discussed.

BD-19-183

Broad – Loosley

“That the Board of Directors requests an in-depth analysis of enquiries related to shoreline erosion on privately-owned property including processes followed, revenues collected and outcomes of those enquiries, and further, how these affect Municipal levy.”

CARRIED

BD-19-184

Brown – Broad

“That the meeting be adjourned.”

CARRIED



Joe Faas
Chair



Brian McDougall
General Manager