



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: February 27, 2020 Time: 10:20 am
Forest Legion Branch 176, Forest, ON

Directors Present: Al Broad, Pat Brown, Andy Bruziewicz, Terry Burrell, Joe Faas, Chair; Larry Gordon, Vice-Chair; Frank Kennes, Brad Loosley, Betty Ann MacKinnon, Kevin Marriott, Netty McEwen, Mark McGill, Dan McMillan, Steve Miller, Frank Nemcek, Mike Stark, Jerry Westgate

Regrets: John Brennan, Carmen McGregor, Lorie Scott

Staff Present: Donna Blue, Manager of Communications; 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; 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; Alison Seidler, GIS Specialist; Steve Shaw, Manager of Conservation Services; Jessy VanderVaart, Assistant Superintendent of Warwick CA, Greg Wilcox, Manager of Conservation Areas

Special Guests Present: Kris Bedard, Brad Bowden, Ashley Didone, MNP LLP; Ron Dodge, Dean Edwardson, Thames-Sydenham & Region Drinking Water Source Projection; Ian Forster, Plains Midstream Canada; John Fraser, Lambton-Kent-Middlesex; Vince Gagner, Sarnia-Lambton Environmental Association; Greg Gaukrodger; Norm Giffen, St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation; Ken Hall, Enbridge; Susan Houston, Archie Kerr, St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation, Vik Kohli, Enbridge; Anne McGugan, Don McGugan, Robert Simpson, Betty Urbanski, John Urbanski Bill Weber, Warden, Lambton County; Julie Welker, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority; Muriel Wright, Deputy Mayor, Town of Plympton-Wyoming; Richard Wyma, Essex Region Conservation Authority

Media Present: Sarah Hornblower, Standard Lambton-Middlesex; Carl Hynatyshyn, Sarnia & Lambton County This Week; Bonnie Stevenson, St. Clair Township Beacon

Conservation Award Winners Present: Sam Somerville

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Joe Faas, who on behalf of the directors and staff of the Conservation Authority welcomed everyone to the 2019 annual meeting and went on to present some of the challenges faced by the Conservation Authority this past year, as well highlighted its many accomplishments.

Record floods impacted many communities across Ontario this year and highlighted the integral role Conservation Authorities hold in flood management and floodplain regulation. In the St. Clair Region alone, 40 flood bulletins were issued over the course of 2019, and the McKeough Floodway was operated for the second time in as many

years.

As a result, it was shocking when provincial transfer payments that support these important programs was cut by 50%, and that the mandate of Conservation Authorities became a topic of debate. Regardless, delivery of important flood management, planning and regulation services to our member municipalities has continued. The St. Clair Region Conservation Authority is actively engaged and involved with provincial representatives while the Conservation Authorities Act continues to be reviewed.

2019 Highlights

- Over 68,000 trees planted throughout the watershed
- Over 12,000 students engaged and educated through Conservation Education programs
- \$8 million dollars in federal funding was received to help support shoreline protection projects along Lake Huron and the St. Clair River, a need highlighted by the record high water levels throughout the Great Lakes.
- Changes to regulatory processes have been made to support provincial priorities and decrease permit approval timelines.
- Almost 800 turtle hatchlings were released into the Sydenham River this year, giving these species at risk a helping hand towards boosting their populations.
- Progress has been made in developing a Detailed Engineering and Design Plan for management of the remaining areas of contaminated sediment in the St. Clair River.
- The continued technical and financial support to local landowners interested in implementing stewardship projects on their properties.
- Over \$3 million in additional funding secured to support our programs thanks to the generosity of local organizations and government agencies.

Greetings were given by: John Fraser on behalf of MPP Monte McNaughton representing Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, Warden Bill Weber on behalf of Lambton County.

The Chair recognized the following special guests and partners in attendance and gave his thanks for their continued support of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority and its programs:

- Ian Forster, Plains Midstream Canada
- Dean Edwardson, Past General Manager of SLEA representing Thames-Sydenham and Region Drinking Water Protection Committee
- Vince Gagner, Sarnia-Lambton Environmental Association
- Ken Hall and Vik Kohli, Enbridge

A thank you was also given to the Board of Directors, The St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation and staff for their hard work over the past year and all they have done to ensure the future success of the organization. The business portion of the meeting was

then commenced.

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-20-01

Loosley – Burrell

“That the agenda for the Annual General Meeting be adopted.”

CARRIED

Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting held on December 12, 2019 were reviewed.

BD-20-02

Miller – Burrell

“That the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting held December 12, 2019, be approved as distributed.”

CARRIED

Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on February 13, 2020 were reviewed.

BD-20-03

MacKinnon – Loosley

“That the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held February 13, 2020, be approved as distributed.”

CARRIED

The 2019 Audited Financial Statements were reviewed.

Director’s Comments:

A request was made to MNP Chartered Professional Accountants LLP to provide a report, separate from the Audited Statements providing a full breakdown and explanation of “Other Income” as referenced on page 5 of the statements. This report is to be distributed to the Board of Directors.

BD-20-04

Marriott – Kennes

“That the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority accepts the recommendation of the Executive Committee and report from the Authority’s auditors, MNP Chartered Professional Accountants LLP, and further approves the 2019 Audited Financial Statements.

CARRIED

Each Year the Conservation Authority presents Conservation Awards to deserving individuals and groups who have contributed to the environmental health of our region.

This year, we have three deserving award recipients. Al and Lisa Nogueira, Austen Wong and Samuel Somerville.

Al and Lisa Nogueira

Al and Lisa are conservation-minded private landowners who own property on the Sydenham River, north of Wallaceburg in St. Clair Township.

- Since 2007, they have retired over 3 hectares (8 acres) of agricultural land to implement best management practices.
- In total, Al and Lisa have planted 6000 trees on their property (3000 in 2007 and 3000 in 2019) along the north branch of the Sydenham River.
- With low forest cover in the St. Clair Region, their willingness to take 3 hectares of agricultural farmland out of production for the purpose of naturalization was welcomed by the Authority. These tree-planting projects will also contribute to the aquatic health of the Sydenham River.
- In addition to their tree planting efforts, Al and Lisa are fighting against invasive Phragmites that have encroached on their property.
- They contracted our conservation services department to control Phragmites located in a gully on their property. In addition, on their own accord, they have incorporated other Phragmites control practices to prevent re-establishment of this invasive grass.
- Champion landowners like Al and Lisa Nogueira contribute to the sustainability and environmental health of the St. Clair Region watershed and we are thankful for their commitment to conservation.

Samuel Somerville and Austen Wong

- This past summer, the SCRCA was fortunate enough to have Sam and Austen volunteer with the Biology department and assist them with summer fieldwork.
- With staffing challenges and a full schedule of monitoring and data collection, the department welcomed the extra set of hands.
- Sam and Austen helped conduct fish and turtle monitoring, data entry, and planning outreach events.
- It was exciting to see the enthusiasm and commitment displayed by these two young men.
- The success of our biological programs this summer wouldn't have been possible without their contributions.

Austen Wong

- Austen is currently at the University of Western Ontario pursuing a degree in Biology (and probably had classes scheduled!).
- Austen developed his interest for the environmental sciences in Grade 9 and it has clearly carried through into his post-secondary studies.
- Austen has been mentored by Girish Sankar, our Director of Water Resources for a number of years. We look forward to seeing where his career path takes him and are extremely grateful for his help this past summer.

Samuel Somerville

- Sam approached the SCRCA this past spring in hopes of securing a volunteer position with the organization.
- Sam is a resident of Strathroy and had already found evening employment at

- a local restaurant.
- He was looking for an opportunity to learn and increase his skills in the environmental sciences prior to entering the fourth year of his Environmental Science program at the University of Guelph.
- Sam’s willingness to learn, strong work ethic and dedication were assets to our team this summer.

BD-20-05

Burrell – Kennes

“That the Board of Directors congratulates the 2019 Conservation Award Winners and thanks them for their contributions to conservation.”

CARRIED

2019 Service Awards were presented

For Five Years of Service:

- Al Broad, Township of Dawn-Euphemia
- Larry Gordon, Village of Point Edward
- Sarah Hume, Payroll and Accounting Clerk
- Jessy VanderVaart, Assistant Superintendent, Warwick Conservation Area

For Ten Years of Service:

- Frank Nemcek, Municipality of Brooke-Alvinston
- Erin Carroll, Director of Biology
- Girish Sankar, Director of Water Resources

For 15 years of Service:

- Dan McMillan, Municipality of Middlesex Centre
- Alison Seidler, GIS Specialist

BD-20-06

Stark – Brown

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the service awards presented to the directors and staff and further that they be thanked for their years of dedicated service.”

CARRIED

The Chair announced the conclusion of 2019 business and called for a break. The meeting resumed for 2020 business at 11:06 a.m.

An acknowledgment of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority Code of Conduct and Administrative By-laws was reviewed and signed by the 2020 Board of Directors.

BD-20-07

Nemcek – Westgate

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges and complies with the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority’s Code of Conduct and Administrative By-laws.”

CARRIED

BD-20-08

Broad – Burrell

“That Norm Giffen be appointed chair for the election of the 2020 Chair and Vice Chair.”

CARRIED

BD-20-09

McMillan – Miller

“That Ian Forster and Richard Wyma be appointed scrutineers in the event of an election.”

CARRIED

The positions of Chair and Vice Chair were declared vacant and nominations were called for the office of Chairman for 2020.

Betty Ann MacKinnon nominated Joe Faas for the position of Chair

BD-20-10

Burrell – Marriott

“That nominations for the position of Chair be closed.”

CARRIED

Joe Faas advised that he would stand.

Joe Faas was declared Chair of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority for 2020 and addressed the Board of Directors.

Mike Stark nominated Larry Gordon for Vice Chair.

BD-20-11

Miller – MacKinnon

“That nominations for the position of Vice Chair be closed.”

CARRIED

Larry Gordon advised that he would stand.

Larry Gordon was declared Vice Chair of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority for 2020 and addressed the Board of Directors.

The 2020 Nominating Committee report was distributed and presented by the Committee Chair, Larry Gordon.

BD-20-12

Gordon – Miller

“That the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority adopts the 2020 Nominating Committee's Report.”

CARRIED

BD-20-14

McMillan – Burrell

“That the Authority Chair or the Vice Chair and the General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer or Director of Finance be authorized to borrow from the Libro Credit Union, Strathroy for the general operations and capital program of the Authority, a sum not to exceed \$1,230,926 to be repaid from grants received from the Province of Ontario, Government of Canada, levies assessed to the member municipalities and general revenue.”

CARRIED

BD-20-15

MacKinnon – Loosley

“That the Authority's 2020 representative to Conservation Ontario will be the Authority Chair, the Vice Chair will be the first alternate and the General Manager be the second alternate.”

CARRIED

Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) Conservation Authority Consultation Engagement Sessions:

- In November, the Chair, Vice Chair and General Manager met with the Minister's staff to present a brief outlining the Authority's programs & projects
- At that time, it was confirmed that broader consultation was planned for early 2020
- In late January, it was confirmed that 3 consultations would be hosted by MECP in Barrie, Peterborough (moved to Colborne) and London
- In his opening remarks on February 14th in London, Minister Yurek announced there will be a fourth consultation in North Bay with details to be announced in the near future
- Minister Yurek also confirmed that Conservation Authorities will not be disbanded and that changes to legislation have not been drafted and will not be until consultation is completed
- The Chair, Vice and 4 other Board members were in attendance at the London Session and their attendance is greatly appreciated
- Each of the consultation sessions has included presentations by several non-government organizations and corporations

- In London, these included Conservation Ontario, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Ducks Unlimited Canada, London Homebuilders Association, EndPointe Development Inc., and the Federation of Ontario Cottager's Association
- This was followed by discussions at diverse assigned seated tables of eight (including a MECP staff recorder) regarding:
 - Mandatory and Non-mandatory Programs and Services
 - The Existing Conservation Authority Model
 - Partnerships and Collaborations
 - Additional Feedback
- There was exchange of views amongst table colleagues regarding opinions on what the Conservation Authorities, the roles and responsibilities, strengths and weaknesses, and governance
- A link to the Conservation Authorities Consultation survey has been provided below which we have been asked to share with other members of your organization or other organizations as appropriate.
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/consultation-ontario-conservation-authorities>

BD-20-16

Brown – Marriott

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the General Manager’s report dated February 18, 2020.”

CARRIED

Regarding BD-18-144

SCRCA staff suggest having Project Consultants present to the Board of Directors meeting in order to walk through the guidelines on the development of flood lines.

Deferred to April, 2020

Regarding BD-19-169

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.

Deferred to April, 2020

Regarding EC-20-04

Committee members recommend implementing an asset management plan as a proactive measure in preparation of the 2021 budget.

Deferred to April, 2020

Regarding EC-20-12

SCRCA staff are requested to meet with Town of Plympton-Wyoming to discuss possibility of a temporary closure of the Highland Glen Conservation Area and report back to the Board of Directors at the Feb 27, 2020 Annual General Meeting.

Please refer to Item 15.4

Meeting Schedule Update: The June Project Tour originally scheduled for June 25th, 2020 at the Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area will now take place on June 18th, 2020.

BD-20-17

Miller – Bruziewicz

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report on business arising dated Feb 15, 2020.”

CARRIED

- The Conservation Authority owns 15 conservation areas
- Seven are managed by the local municipality and 8 are operated by the Conservation Authority
- Three of the eight 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 the campgrounds are held in reserve to fund capital upgrades in the campgrounds
- The camping season in 2020 runs from April 24 to Thanksgiving Day

Launch of CAMIS On-line Reservation System for Camping

On January 6, 2020, SCRCA launched its first on-line camping reservation system. The launch was very successful with almost 120 reservations made in the first 20 minutes. The system did pose some challenges when first launched. A couple minor glitches were discovered which CAMIS has worked to resolve. A few customers had challenges using the on-line system and were guided through the process by SCRCA staff.

- As of January 31, 2020 payments received for overnight camping totalled \$99,827
- Payments received by January 31, 2019 totalled \$77,562
- Overnight camping revenue as of January 31, 2020 was up 28% from 2019
- Starting March 16, 2020 customers will be able to reserve campsites by calling the parks directly or continue to book on-line

Recent Campground Improvements (fall/winter):

Warwick Conservation Area

- Fiber optic internet cable installed to three locations. Internet will be available to campers at two hub locations.
- Two new internet hub locations being constructed, a pavilion behind the gatehouse on the west side of the park and a new internet building in the day use area on the east side of the park

- A wetland was constructed to reduce erosion, improve water quality, and provide important wildlife habitat. Funding for the project was provided by the Habitat Stewardship Program, Wildlife Habitat Canada, and the St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation.
- 200m of reservoir shoreline will no longer be mowed to the waters edge. A 2-meter perimeter will be naturalized to reduce shoreline erosion.
- Drainage tile installed to improve drainage in the day use area (around the mini-golf course) and drainage installed for 4 seasonal lots that experienced standing water during wet Spring conditions

Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area

- A new boardwalk has been constructed in one of the ponds to be used by the Education department and campers/visitors
- A walking lane has been created along a short stretch of the entrance lane to separate vehicle and pedestrian traffic

Day Use Conservation Areas:

- A wetland has been constructed at Bridgeview CA, including the wetland, approximately 2 acres of park will be naturalized. More than 50 dead standing (hazard) trees were cut down and removed from the park. Trees and native pollinator habitat will be planted in the spring.
- Almost 50 hazard trees were cut down at Wawanosh CA improving safety along the trails. This spring/summer the existing viewing platform will be decommissioned and a new boardwalk will be constructed extending into the South wetland cell providing improved wildlife viewing opportunities.
- Almost 100 hazard trees were cut down at Strathroy CA improving safety along the trails. Following a January flood, 15 sections of boardwalk had to be rebuilt/repositioned. Planning has begun to upgrade existing boardwalks this spring/summer including installation of some new sections.
- Funding has been secured from Enbridge to conduct phragmites removal at Peers Wetland CA in 2020. Funding will be used to purchase required materials including waders, cane cutters, and personal protective equipment. Work will be completed by volunteers, and organized by the Sydenham Field Naturalists with support of SCRCA staff.
- At Coldstream CA, both the municipality and SCRCA worked to remove hazard trees along the wetland trail. Approximately 30 hazard trees were cut down. Boardwalk repairs were completed in November after sections were damaged during a fall storm.

BD-20-18

Nemcek – Miller

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the update report dated February 5, 2020 on Conservation Areas.”

CARRIED

Highland Glen Conservation Area comprises approximately 26 acres of predominantly wooded land. Situated on the Lake Huron shoreline, it is located in Plympton-Wyoming approximately 10km west of Forest. The property was purchased as two parcels, one in 1976 and one in 1977. The Conservation Area contains an access roadway, parking lot, pavilion, and boat ramp with seawall and groyne protection.

The groyne on the west side of the boat ramp was constructed by the landowner prior to acquisition by the Authority. In 1986/87 the access road, parking lot, and boat ramp were constructed. Due to safety concerns at the ramp, additional protection was constructed in 1990. The works consisted of a steel sheet pile and armour stone breakwall on the northeast side of the ramp and a steel sheet pile curtain wall connected to the existing groyne on the southwest side.

In late November, damage occurred to the seawall protection. The steel sheet pile on the original groyne at the west side was removed by wave action. In addition to the groyne damage, considerable erosion is occurring on both the east and west side of the ramp protection structures. On the east, the erosion is moving closer to the parking lot and within the protection, erosion has exposed the steel sheet wall side of the ramp.

Safety Concerns:

- Waves coming from the west can create rough conditions at the ramp
- High water may not allow walkways along the boat ramp to be installed at a safe height above water level
- Since groyne failure, sediment has quickly accumulated beside the ramp which may impact the ability to launch and navigate within the ramp protection
- Erosion has exposed the eastern side of the retaining wall that supports the boat ramp

Financial Impact:

Costs of repairs are unknown at this time. Estimated costs of closing the boat ramp for 2020 include:

- \$800 to place 2 concrete barricades at the entry to the ramp
- \$400 for temporary closure signs at Highland Glen CA
- \$8,640 (average of 2017 – 2019) in lost revenue from the boat ramp

Updated quotes including the full scope of necessary repairs will be brought forward to the April 16, 2020 Board of Directors meeting for further discussion.

Staff are awaiting response from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans on the status of Highland Glen as a Safe Harbour. Currently Highland Glen is not included on the map of Safe Harbours.

BD-20-19**Bruziewicz – McMillan**

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated February 18, 2020 regarding the boat ramp at Highland Glen and further recommends temporary closure for the 2020 season.”

CARRIED

- Flood threat is moderate due to high water levels on the Great Lakes and in Wallaceburg; ice is not currently a threat
- Lake Huron exceeded its 1987 record-high in January by 8cm, Lake St. Clair met its record
- Water levels for Lakes Huron and St. Clair are projected to exceed record levels over the next 5 months into June
- Precipitation was well below normal in November and December; long-term regional averages are on par with regional normals

Flood Threat

The current flood threat is moderate owing to sustained high water levels in the Great Lakes, Lake St. Clair, St. Clair River, and the Sydenham River at Wallaceburg. Fluctuating temperatures and precipitation this winter has resulted in minimal snowpack and ice cover.

- January 2020 water levels in Wallaceburg were 43cm higher than January 2019
- Currently only 15cm freeboard between top of bank and water level

Great Lakes Levels

- Lake Huron exceeded the 1987 record by 8cm, while Lake St. Clair met its record level
- Lake Huron is projected to exceed record-high water levels over the next 6 months into July
- Lake St. Clair is projected to exceed record-high water levels over the next 5 months into June

Precipitation Conditions

- Precipitation was below normal in November and December 2019, however significant rainfall in January 2020 has increased the overall average for the past 3 months
- Long-term precipitation averages are on par with precipitation normals

BD-20-20**Marriott – Burrell**

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated February 12, 2020 regarding current watershed conditions and Great Lakes water levels.”

CARRIED

- DiCocco Contractors was awarded the contract work on December 18, 2019 at a value of \$314,512.90 inclusive of H.S.T. for the shoreline improvement work that involves construction of approximately 70 metres of an armour stone revetment.
- A Contract Change Order was required to be issued in the amount of \$14,400 to remove trees at the shoreline within the Phase 3 work area, not already identified in the contract.
- Work commenced the week of January 20, 2020 with tree removal along the shoreline.
- SCRCA staff will have discussions over opportunities for tree replacement once the project work is complete.
- A stormwater outfall along the shoreline has been identified as needing replacement. SCRCA staff are working with SCRCA's consulting engineer, St. Clair Township, and the contractor to ensure that the outfall is replaced to the satisfaction of the municipality, as part of this contract work.

Bright's Grove Shoreline Erosion Control Projects: Three Locations

Bright's Grove, Kenwick Street to Helen Avenue – Phase 2

- Cope Construction was awarded the contract work on October 24, 2019 at a value of \$890,111.17 inclusive of H.S.T.
- Work commenced in December 2019 and remains underway.
- Shoreline work progressing slower as expected
- An extension of approximately 50 m will be included as a part of this work and a change order will be issued.
- High water levels posing construction challenges and reducing the work days.
- All in water works must be completed before March 15, 2020.

Bright's Grove, Kenwick Street to Helen Avenue – Phase 3

- Six tenders were submitted.
- The low tender was submitted by Amico Infrastructures (Oxford) Inc. at a value of \$2,206,534.86, inclusive of H.S.T.
- Based on the experience listed in the tender, the contractor had the ability to complete the work. The contractor also had the ability to work immediately upon award and execution of the contract.
- The contract was awarded to Amico on January 18, 2020.
- A site meeting was held on January 21, 2020 and site work began on February 10, 2020.

Bright's Grove, Old Lakeshore Road East

- Six tenders were submitted.
- The low tender was submitted by Facca Incorporated Inc. at a value of \$1,570,774.00, inclusive of H.S.T.
- Based on the experience listed in the tender, the contractor had the ability to complete the work. The contractor also had the ability to work immediately upon award and execution of the contract.

- The contract was awarded to Facca Incorporated on January 16, 2020.
- A site meeting was held on January 21, 2020 and site work began on February 10, 2020.

BD-20-21

Bruziewicz – MacKinnon

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated February 14, 2020 on the Phase 3 Courtright Shoreline Revitalization Project and Brights Grove shoreline restoration work.”

CARRIED

The Planning Activity Summary Report for the period from November 1, 2019 to January 31, 2020 was reviewed.

Directors Comments:

Directors enquired on the possibility of including the month cases are opened within the planning activity reference number.

BD-20-22

McMillan – Burrell

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority’s monthly Planning Activity Summary Report, dated February 3, 2020 for the period from November 1, 2019 to January 31, 2020.”

CARRIED

Regulations Activity Summary Report on "Development, Interference with Wetlands & Alterations to Shorelines & Watercourses" Regulations (Ontario Regulation 171/06) from November 1, 2019 to January 31, 2020 was reviewed.

BD-20-23

Miller – Burrell

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges and concurs with the Regulations Activity Summary Report dated February 18, 2020 on "Development, Interference with Wetlands & Alterations to Shorelines & Watercourses" Regulations (Ontario Regulation 171/06) from November 1, 2019 to January 31, 2020.”

CARRIED

A.W. Campbell Maple Syrup Festival

Date: Saturday, March 21 to Sunday, March 22, 2020

Time: 10 am to 3 pm

Location: A.W. Campbell Conservation Area

Sydenham River Canoe and Kayak Race

Date: Sunday, April 19, 2020

Registration: 10 am to 11 am

Start Location: Mossie Line at Sydenham River

End Location: Shetland Conservation Area

Denning's Memorial Forest Dedication

Date: Sunday, June 7, 2020

Time: 2 pm

Location: Centennial Park, Strathroy

Education Demonstration (Proposed)

Date: Thursday, June 18, 2020

Time: 9 - 10 am (Board Meeting to Follow)

Location: Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area

Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup - Ipperwash Beach

Date: To Be Determined

Time: 9 am to 11 am

Location: Centre Ipperwash Beach Boat Launch

A Geocaching Adventure - 20th Anniversary

Date: Sunday, September 20, 2020

Time: 9 am

Location: Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area

Foundation Memorial Forest Dedication

Date: Sunday, September 27, 2020

Time: 2 pm

Location: Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area

Director's Comments:

Director Frank Nemcek gave a reminder of the upcoming Alvinston Firefighter's Maple Syrup Festival Saturday, March 21 to Sunday, March 22, 2020 and encouraged everyone to attend.

BD-20-24

Brown – Nemcek

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the schedule of Special Events outlined in the attached flyer.”

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 Objectives(s):

The Healthy Watershed Program fulfills Goals 2 and 3 of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority strategic objectives; Protect, manage, and restore our natural systems including woodlands, wetlands, waterways, and lakes and provide recreation and education opportunities for the public to enjoy and learn from our natural environment. 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 beginning, 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:**Wetland and Phosphorus Workshop January 14, 2020**

The workshop took place at the SCRCA office, focusing on the implementation of wetlands on retired agricultural land. Thirty-three attendees participated in the event, landowners who have implemented or are thinking about implementing wetlands as well as staff from various CAs. SCRCA staff member, Jessica Van Zwol began the workshop by speaking on the biological diversity and Species at Risk found within the Sydenham River watershed. Racheal Scholten of Ducks Unlimited Canada shared information on their conservation programs and their study on the role of newly implemented wetlands have to capturing phosphorus in agriculture watersheds. This study had contracted SCRCA to conduct on-site monitoring and sampling. Lindsay Buchanan from Rural Lambton Stewardship Network spoke on the advantages and challenges of incorporating wetlands in the Municipal Drain Report of the *Drainage Act*. Nancy Vidler from Lambton Shores Phragmites Community Group spoke on multiple control methods for invasive Phragmites. Two farmers spoke in front of the crowd of the benefits that their restored wetlands had on their agricultural lands.

Lambton Soils & Crop Improvement Association Annual General Meeting January 17, 2020

SCRCA Chair Joe Faas was among those who awarded Brad Goodhill the 2020 Lambton Soil & Crop Improvement Association Outstanding Farmer. Brad is a 3rd generation farmer in the Warwick Township farming approximately 1,400 acres with his brother, Greg. Brad had a strong influence on other producers to convert to strip till, a practise that he is experienced with. Brad also has a lot of presence in the community, celebrating his 35th year on the fire department, 10 of those years as chief and 21 years as deputy chief. He also served 10 years on council and is president of the Watford Medical Centre. SCRCA staff spoke in front of a crowd of 100 to promote grant funding for farmers interested in reducing soil erosion, tree planting or fragile land retirement. Furthermore, staff promoted the upcoming Nutrient Management workshop and Soil Health Day events.

Nutrient Management Workshop January 22, 2020

The workshop was held at the Brooke-Alvinston-Inwood Community Centre with 25 people in attendance. SCRCA staff member, Jessica Van Zwol began the workshop by speaking on the biological diversity and Species at Risk found within the Sydenham River watershed. Kevin McKague presented about the update toolset on OMAFRA's AgriSuite that calculates manure and fertilizer application needs and total nutrients on one's farm. Peter Kotzeff, a Bruce County farmer, spoke on his management of over 1,800 acres using cover crop and intensive grazing to build soil health, improve water quality and riparian ecosystems. Lastly, Graham McLean from Agris Co-op spoke about Timing Matters, an initiative between OMAFRA and agricultural sector organizations to raise awareness on the risks of winter spreading and provide a peer-to-peer response team to help farmers find alternatives.

Soil Health Day February 12, 2020

Soil Health Day was an all-day event at the Brooke-Alvinston-Inwood Community Centre. The event was funded by the Canadian Nature Fund from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The event focused on the current action plans for phosphorus load reductions in Lake Erie watershed as well the conservation and protection of the biological diversity of the Sydenham River watershed.

David Balint (Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada) spoke on the biological diversity and water quality concerns of the Sydenham River watershed. Dr. Donald Scavia (University of Michigan) and Dr. Awoke Dagne (Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc) spoke of their modelled phosphorus mass balance of the Lake Erie watershed. They showed how Lake Erie is influenced by Canadian agricultural non-point sources and highlighted BMP that would help reach the 40% phosphorus loading reduction targets. Ian Smith (Lydian Environmental Consulting) provided examples of stream remediation work and cost-effective options to improving the water quality of municipal drains. Bryan Page (Ducks Unlimited Canada) shared the results of the one-year study on the role of newly restored wetlands to capturing phosphorus. Steve Groff video conferenced and spoke about cover crops, planting green, and the importance of improving soil health. Christine George (Soil Health Consultant) spoke on soil microbes found in soils with cover crops.

The afternoon sessions highlighted local farmers Dan Breen and Jim Denys, the 2018 and 2019 OSCIA Soil Champions, respectively. University of Guelph professors, Dr. Naresh Thevathasan and Dr. Richard Heck spoke on carbon sequestration in riparian buffers and the soil structure of the top soil in different crop rotations, respectively. Michael Funk (Upper Thames River Conservation Authority) presented his current on-site research on controlled drainage. Mike Belan (farmer) spoke on cost-effective equipment modifications for inter-seeding and cover crop establishments.

Nearly 100 farmers, agriculture industry, municipal, government and conservation representatives were in attendance.

BD-20-25

McMillan – Burrell

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the status report dated February 18, 2020, regarding Healthy Watersheds Program updates.”

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 November 2019 board report:

Date	Item	Details
Ongoing	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 attending and hosting local rural water quality events• Staff participating on the Lake Erie Action Plan Implementation Committee; Agricultural and Natural Heritage Subcommittees

Date	Item	Details
November 29, 2019	Non-Point Source Working Group Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview; • Updates; • Special Presentation: Charlie Lalonde, Thames River Phosphorus Reduction Collaborative • Discussion; received feedback and direction
December 5, 2019	Point Source Working Group Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview; • Updates; • Discussion; 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 ECCO totaling \$220,000 covering 2019-2022 which will support the development of the Sydenham Watershed Phosphorus Management Plan.

BD-20-26

Gordon – Nemcek

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the update on the Sydenham River Phosphorus Management Plan dated February 18, 2020.”

CARRIED

Under New Business

Welcome to Netty McEwen of Plympton-Wyoming, attending on behalf of Director Ron Schenk.

Farewell and appreciation to Dallas Cundick on his last day as Manager of Planning and Regulations. Staff and Directors wish Dallas success in his new endeavour.

Concerns were brought forth regarding temporary storage of bio-solids on local regulated areas within close proximity to bodies of water and/ or drainage. SCRCA Regulatory staff are in discussions with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs regarding a solution. For the interim, relocation of such storage outside floodplain areas is preferred.

BD-20-27

Broad – Burrell

“The Board of Directors requests a report to be provided at the April 16, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting on the subject of bio-solids and its potential effects on local water quality and further that this topic be included as part of the SCRCA Phosphorous Management Plan”

CARRIED

BD-20-28

MacKinnon – Miller

“That the meeting be adjourned.”

CARRIED



Joe Faas
Chair



Brian McDougall
General Manager