



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: June 24, 2021

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Remote

Present: Alan Broad, John Brennan, Pat Brown, Terry Burrell, Bill Dennis, Joe Faas, Chair; Larry Gordon, Vice Chair; Aaron Hall, Frank Kennes, Brad Loosley, Betty Ann MacKinnon, Kevin Marriott, Netty McEwen, Mark McGill, Dan McMillan, Steve Miller, Frank Nemcek, Lorie Scott, Mike Stark, Jerry Westgate

Staff Present: Donna Blue, Manager of Communications; Erin Carroll, Director of Biology; Melissa Deisley, Regulations Coordinator; Chris Durand, Manager of IT/ GIS; Roland Eveleens, Sarah Hodgkiss, Planning Ecologist; FishCAST Intern; Ashley Fletcher, Administrative Assistant/ Board Coordinator; Melissa Levi, Conservation Education Technician; 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; Myra Spiller, Conservation Education/Community Partnership Technician; Greg Wilcox, Manager of Conservation Areas

Guests Present:

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-21-48

Burrell – Scott

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

CARRIED

The minutes of the Board of Directors meeting, held April 15, 2021 were reviewed.

BD-21-49

Dennis – Kennes

“That the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting, held April 15, 2021, be approved as distributed.”

CARRIED

Part two of three presentations on Regulations and the Drainage Act was provided by Melissa Deisley, Regulations Coordinator. Part three of the presentation will be provided at the September 16, 2021 meeting.

BD-21-50

Loosley – Scott

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges part two of the presentation titled Regulations and the Drainage Act, presented by Melissa Deisley, Regulations Coordinator.”

CARRIED

An introduction to Melissa Levi, Conservation Education Coordinator and Myra Spiller, Conservation Education/Community Partnership Technician was provided by Donna Blue, Manager of Communications. Melissa Levi and Myra Spiller provided a presentation live from the canoe at the Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area.

Director’s Comments:

Directors gave thanks for the presentation. Discussions were held regarding phragmites and current treatment options.

BD-21-51

Gordon – Westgate

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the Education Department presentation titled Live-Stream from the Canoe, presented by Melissa Levi, Conservation Education Technician and Myra Spiller, Conservation Education/Community Partnership Technician”

CARRIED

Service Delivery Review Update:

- In September 2020, the Authority directed staff to contract a consultant to provide a service delivery review with regards to the Authority’s Planning and Regulations Department
- Tim Dobbie Consulting completed interviews with CA staff, Board Members, municipal staff, developers and builders, and comparator Conservation Authorities has provided a great deal of information
- A Technical Advisory Committee of Melissa Deisley, Acting Co-Manager of Planning and Regulations, Sarah Hodgkiss, Acting Co-Manager of Planning and Regulations, Chris Durand, Manager of GIS/IT and myself have been meeting with the consultant to provide input to the project
- It was intended that the Final Report for the review would be provided to the Board of Directors at their meeting in April
- Unfortunately COVID-19 slowed the interview process and the report was not available

- The intention was then to bring the Final Report forward to the June meeting, however, staff and the consultant continue to work on the content of the final report
- The report will provide important information regarding the operations of the Planning and Regulations department and staff believe that it is important to present the findings of the report to you prior to the draft budget that will be presented in September
- Therefore, I will be requesting that the Chair call a meeting of the Board of Directors in late July or early August to receive the final report as well as a presentation and discussion with Tim Dobbie and his team

Search for new General Manger:

- The Executive Committee met on May 6, 2020 to provide direction on a path to the selection of a new General Manager
- The Executive Committee were presented examples of job descriptions, postings, advertisements, resume matrixes and interview questions
- It was confirmed that senior Human Resources staff of the City of Sarnia had been contacted and were prepared to assist with the process
- The Executive Committee is expected to meet during the week of June 28th to review a timeline for the hiring, an updated job description, plans to post and advertise the position, review a resume review matrix, review interview questions

Director’s Comments:

Directors look forward to reviewing the report from Tim Dobbie and request a separate meeting to address. Questions and discussion took place regarding the change in cabinet ministers and whether the shuffle will affect the proposed regulatory changes.

BD-21-52

Scott – MacKinnon

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the General Manager’s report, dated June 17, 2021.”

CARRIED

Background:

- On May 13th, 2021, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) posted Phase 1 of the Regulatory Proposals under the Conservation Authorities Act to the Environmental Registry for public and agency review
- The proposed regulations for consultation in phase one are focused on:
 - i. Mandatory programs and services all CAs would be required to provide

- ii. Requirements for agreements between CAs and participating municipalities (use of municipal levy to fund non-mandatory programs and services)
 - iii. Details of the transition plan CAs must prepare (including preparing an inventory of the authority's programs and services, and steps to enter into agreements with municipalities)
 - iv. Requirements for each CA to establish a community advisory board
 - v. Details around the consolidation of individual CA 'Conservation Areas' regulations into a single, Minister's regulation.
- Consultation on these Phase 1 regulatory proposals is open until June 27th, 2021
 - According to the MECP website (last updated May 13th, 2021) the Phase 2 regulatory proposal will be released for consultation later this year, and will focus on municipal levies related to mandatory and non-mandatory programs and services, and the standards for the delivery of non-mandatory programs and services
 - The proposed submission highlights the work that the Authority will do to support successful implementation while flagging a number of limitations including ever shortening timelines and cost and capacity

Proposed Comments on ERO#019-2986:

- The following represents the comments on this first phase of regulatory amendments

Mandatory Programs and Services

- These categories of programs and services offered by the SCRCA are related to:
 - Risk of natural hazards
 - Conservation and management of lands owned or controlled by a conservation authority, including any interests in land registered on title.
 - Conservation authority duties, functions and responsibilities as a source protection authority under the Clean Water Act, 2006.
- In addition, we were pleased to see the addition of under the category of F - Other programs or services prescribed by the regulation within a year of the end of the transition period which are proposed to be:
 - F. Other program or services as prescribed
 - a. Core Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy
 - b. Provincial Water Quality and Quantity Monitoring

A. Hazards

- Generally, the scope of programs and services included by MECP in the proposals for natural hazards are comprehensive

- We were pleased to see the recognition of land use planning input, stream morphology, floodplain mapping, flood risk mapping and the inclusion of all the tools that CAs need to carry out our flood management program, including communications support which is particularly important during an event
- We also note the inclusion of a low water program which, with climate change, is becoming an important function
- The province has not included a specific reference to wetland mapping, which should be added

General Comments:

- Concerns for future funding by the province for hazard management programs have been raised with 50% cuts to the MNRF funding for their natural hazards program in 2019
- In 2020, the MNRF transfer payment covered less than 11% of the actual cost to deliver the hazard management program (Section 39) in this watershed
- Funding of the natural hazards program, as outlined in 1996, was intended to be a 50:50 partnership split between the Province of Ontario and the municipal membership of each Conservation Authority
- Mandates to focus on priorities and increased administrative requirements without a commitment to increase Provincial transfer payments does not start to balance the equation
- Infrastructure funding support through the Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) Program is essential for continued maintenance and repairs to our water management infrastructure

B. Conservation Lands

- The second area of mandatory program and services relates to the management of Conservation Authority land
- There are new mandatory requirements proposed for strategies or management plans for all properties and land acquisition policy approved by the board
- These are valuable documents used to direct the operation of a parcel – however they are often difficult to complete or update with existing staffing
- The regulation is seeking plans for all properties
- SCRCA owns a lot of parcels of land this would be an onerous task
- The grouping of lands or categorization of parcels should be considered to assist in completion of the plans however flexibility in deadlines will be required without funding support

- We were pleased to see the inclusion of natural heritage monitoring and management as part of the mandatory programs for CA lands to maintain or rehabilitate them but remain disappointed that the importance of this work is not equally valued throughout the watershed
- Specifically excluded from this mandatory area are any recreational uses of the lands like walking trails, that are provided free of charge to the public
- SCRCA has many properties that offer trails for which there will be no levy to monitor, maintain or manage risk
- This may necessitate that the trails be closed to public use or that gates and/or fees of some manner will need to be collected to enable the management of the recreational use, if a municipality does not wish to enter into an agreement for special levy funds to support non-mandatory programs
- According to the consultation guide, it would appear that this type of passive recreation is not to be considered mandatory and therefore would require municipal agreement
- However, it is very difficult to separate passive recreation from property security, considered mandatory service
- In addition, some parcels located within one municipality but used by residents from outside the municipality or beyond
- Sharing of costs for these shared resources to specific municipalities will be difficult to determine - How are these costs treated if one municipality does not wish to contribute?
- In addition, we feel the provision of private land stewardship programs such as tree-planting and soil erosion control for mitigation of natural hazards should be included as a new mandatory activity
- The issues that prompted the establishment of many Conservation Authorities were related to deforestation and its impact on water supply, drought, soil erosion and flooding
- Early emphasis in some Conservation Authorities was on forest acquisition, reforestation and aiding landowners to reforest marginal land – basically water/hazard management through forest management
- Research has demonstrated the importance of nature based solutions such as protecting and restoring headwater areas, flood plains, river valleys, riparian areas, and wetlands in order to reduce the risk of flooding, erosion and drought
- Nature based approaches are much cheaper to implement than grey infrastructure approaches

- It is requested that the long understood value of forests, wetlands and riparian buffers in the watershed-based prevention and mitigation of flood and erosion hazards be acknowledged and that provision of private land stewardship programs such as tree-planting and soil erosion control be included in the mandatory programs and services related to the Risk of Natural Hazards
- While there may be, from time to time, other sources of funding available for the disbursement cost of these programs, funding for planning, outreach and delivery of these projects is not
- Continuity, relationship building and a watershed approach to these programs are important in the mitigation of flood and erosion hazards
- They also build resiliency into our watershed systems as we deal with the impacts of a changing climate

General Comments:

- That the province includes the infrastructure to support public access opportunities (such as walking trails) that are provided free of charge to the public as an eligible mandatory activity on conservation authority lands
- Public access to CA owned lands is a cost effective means of reducing encroachment and other illegal activities and promotes equitable access to green infrastructure
- Also related to green infrastructure, the provision of private land stewardship programs such as tree-planting and soil erosion control for mitigation of natural hazards be included as a new mandatory activity

C. Source Water Protection

- The inclusion of Source Water Protection is new for municipalities as the Province has funded this program at 100% since its inception
- CAs are required to exercise and perform the powers and duties of a Drinking Water Source Protection Authority and implement programs and services related to responsibilities identified under the Clean Water Act
- The mandatory programs and services identified in the discussion paper are generally consistent with Source Protection Authority tasks as identified in the Clean Water Act
- Conservation Authorities, as Source Protection Authorities, play a role in approvals for municipalities (e.g., issuing notices to drinking water system owners for a S. 34 amendment, monitoring and reporting on source protection plan implementation/ compliance)

- Identifying Source Water Protection as a mandatory program under the CA Act creates a framework for an anticipated future shift in program funding from MECP grants to municipal levy
- If funding for the source water program eventually shifts to municipalities, they would effectively be funding an approvals/enforcement agency, which would be a conflict of interest
- It will be important to understand MECP's intent with respect to continued financial support for this program this fall as we are informing the municipalities of the potential budget implications of the changes
- By inclusion under mandatory programs it signals a requirement to be included in the levy, although provincial funding may continue to be provided
- MECP has been unclear in their responses about the potential for continued funding but given the importance of this program to Ontario we encourage the province to maintain funding, at a minimum for the core administrative program and staff for the Source Protection Regions that are shared across multiple CAs
- Further, this funding needs to be indexed for inflation so that there is no erosion of the ability to implement the requirements of the Clean Water Act

General Comments:

- It is recommended that the MECP continue to fully fund Source Protection Authority responsibilities under the Clean Water Act through provincial transfer payments
- This funding needs to be indexed for inflations as to not impact the implementation of the requirements under the Clean Water Act

F. Other Programs Prescribed in Legislation

Watershed Based Resources Management Strategy

- The addition of the watershed-based resources management strategy is positive as it provides a longer-term perspective as well as an organizing framework for categorizing the mandatory and non-mandatory programs and services for consultation with municipalities
- SCRCA strongly supports inclusion of core watershed-based resource management strategies as a mandatory program and service because it provides a framework for Conservation Authorities and their member municipalities to identify and prioritize the programs and services most needed in each watershed to protect people and property from natural

hazards and conserve natural resources

General Comments:

- This incredibly valuable document which will enable and encourage the integration of all other mandatory programs and identify non-mandatory programs
- However, the process to create such a document requires funding and staff capacity to undertake, such funding is not included within the current budget and will not be well received moving forward

Provincial Water Quality and Quantity Monitoring

- SCRCA staff have been carrying out monitoring of surface and ground water on behalf of the province for years, with the province providing support largely in the form of lab analysis
- It is unfortunate that the province did not specifically allow for the additional surface water quality monitoring that is needed for our own programs to provide better coverage in support of a variety of municipal and CA needs

General Comments:

- Please clarify that MECP will continue to be a funding partner for the proposed mandatory Provincial Water Quality and Quantity Monitoring program

Regulations for Municipal Agreements

- Regulatory authority for agreements for municipal funding of non-mandatory programs and services and the regulatory authority for a transition period/plan to develop the agreements is proposed to be combined into one Minister's regulation - Regulation for Municipal Agreements and Transition Period.
- The proposed agreements regulation could require that the agreements do the following:
 - a. Include a provision that the participating municipality agrees to pay its apportioned levy for the non-mandatory program or service
 - b. Set out the termination date of the agreement
 - c. Certain time periods may also be specified for the purposes of reviewing and renewing any such agreements that are reached
 - d. Include provisions governing early termination and governing notice and resolution of breaches of the agreement

- e. Include transparency provisions (e.g., that agreements are available to the public online)
- The ministry is proposing that agreement arrangements between conservation authorities and municipalities could be flexible according to program or service circumstances (i.e. an agreement for a program or service could be with one or more participating municipalities or could be separate agreements per participating municipality including all the conservation authority-determined programs or services that a municipality may agree to fund, etc.)
- The flexibility is intended to support efficiency, expedite the agreement(s) and be cost effective in any potential legal or accounting fees

General Comments:

- It is important that flexibility be retained to ensure that each municipality can approach the agreements to best suit their needs
- With the agreements being due on or before December 2022 in an election year will be very challenging to achieve within council deadlines for business to be completed before the election
- The tight timelines only exacerbate the issues of capacity and funding as staff are completely occupied with the programs that fund their salaries
- Further, the budgets attached to the non-mandatory programs will not be approved until the new council takes office in 2023

Transition Plans

- Un-proclaimed provisions in the CA Act would, once proclaimed, also establish a requirement each conservation authority to develop and implement a transition plan that includes:
 - a. A work plan and timeline outlining the steps the conservation authority plans to take to develop and enter into agreements with its participating municipalities
 - b. The preparation of an inventory of all of the authority's programs and services, with clear indication for each program and service which of the three categories it fits into (mandatory programs and services where municipal levy could be used without any agreement; non-mandatory programs and services at the request of a municipality with municipal funding through a MOU; non-mandatory programs and services an authority determines are advisable), and how they are funded (e.g., provincial, federal, municipal funding, municipal levy, and self-generated revenue)

- c. The consultation process with participating municipalities on the inventory
 - d. A list of any new mandatory programs and services the authority will need to provide to meet the requirements of the mandatory program and services regulation
 - e. A list of non-mandatory programs and services for which the authority will seek municipal agreement to fund via municipal levies, including estimated amounts requested/required from the participating municipalities to do so.
 - f. A list of non-mandatory programs and services that do not require municipal agreements (if the programs and services are funded by revenue that is not from a municipal levy).
 - g. Steps taken and/or to be taken to enter into these agreements.
- CA's with Conservation Ontario are already looking at ways to be consistent in our classification of programs and services using standardized approaches
 - The government proposes to require that the mandatory conservation authority transition plans be completed by the end of 2021 and that quarterly progress reports be provided to the Ministry
 - This is tight but we can proceed assuming limited change to the scope of the regulations
 - Should significant change happen it may become difficult to meet that timeline
 - The province is then proposing that all required conservation authority/municipal agreements would need to be in place, and the transition to the new funding model for CAs and municipalities would be reflected in our budget for **January 1, 2023**.

General Comments:

- The timeline proposed is a very tight timeline given the regulations, and subsequent phases of regulations including for the levy and fees have yet to be released, timing of 2023 budget preparations, municipal elections and resulting limitations on approvals for MOUs and agreements
- The tight timelines only exacerbate the issues of capacity and funding as staff are completely occupied with the programs that fund their salaries

Section 29 Minister's Regulation

- Under the Conservation Authorities Act, conservation authorities are required to provide programs and services related to the conservation and management of lands owned or controlled by the authority

- This includes a regulation made under Section 29 of the Conservation Authorities Act regarding public use of authority's property
- It is proposed that the Section 29 regulation be redesigned to better align with by-laws made under the Municipal Act related to the use of municipal property including parks, and the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006 and its associated regulations, including O. Reg. 347/07: Provincial Parks: General Provisions

General Comments:

- That the province defer the approval of a new Section 29 regulation until such time as a fulsome review and update of the regulation can be undertaken
- It is important that CAs have the right tools to take us into the future where our conservation areas are heavily used by tourists and locals alike

Community Advisory Board

- The Province is proposing to proclaim an un-proclaimed provision of the CA Act related to advisory boards to require CAs to establish community advisory boards, that can include members of the public, to provide advice to the authority
- In recognition of the variation in the circumstances of individual conservation authorities, the Province is considering an approach to structure the CA community advisory boards with minimal prescribed requirements to enable local flexibility of some aspects of the community advisory board to reflect a conservation authority's circumstances and to accommodate a conservation authority's preferences for their use of the community advisory board
- Specific details related to the composition, activities, functions, duties, and procedures of the community advisory board will be outlined in a Terms of Reference (TOR) document to be approved by the Board of Directors
- The province intends to require the TOR also outline specific functions and activities of the community advisory board scoped to the authority's needs, and at a minimum enable community advisory board members to:
 - a. Provide advice and recommendations to the authority on the authority's strategic priorities and associated policies, programs and services
 - b. Discuss opportunities to co-ordinate with other environmental initiatives in the authority's jurisdiction (e.g. municipal)
 - c. Identify opportunities for community engagement
 - d. Suggest potential community outreach opportunities

- The province intends to prescribe certain aspects in regulation related to the composition of the community advisory board but leaving considerable flexibility for the CA

General Comment:

- Currently, the SCRCA does not have a Community Advisory Board or similar subcommittee of the Board of Directors
- Several subcommittees are in place which are focused on specific issues or situations (Flood Action Committee, Low Water Response Committee, etc.) but no committee with open focus to all aspects of the Authority as this has been viewed as the duties of the Board of Directors (with 20 representatives of 17 municipalities forming the Board of Directors)
- The additional administrative burden on the levy to support the Community Advisory Board (CAB), assuming per diems are paid, staff support and reports required for meetings, time and place for meetings to be held, minutes and agenda's prepared as supported by the current administrative functions cannot be overlooked and further adds to the issues of capacity and funding as staff are completely occupied with the programs that fund their salaries
- The proposed timing of the creation and implementation of the CAB should coincide with the implementation of new municipal agreements in January 2023 and reflect the input of new councils taking office in November 2022 and appointing their representatives to the Conservation Authority (CA) General Membership.

Conclusion:

- The Province has released the first phase of regulatory proposals for public comment by June 27th, 2021
- The regulations have been informed by a working group of CA's and stakeholders appointed to advise the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks
- The proposed regulations for consultation in phase one are focused on: definition of mandatory programs and services, the proposed agreements required with participating municipalities for municipal levy to fund non-mandatory programs and services, the transition period to establish those agreements, the requirement to establish 'community' advisory boards, and, a consolidated Minister's section 29 regulation relating to conservation authority (CA) operation and management of conservation lands

- While there are still some areas for improvement in the proposed regulations, the content covers the important functions of the CA and aligns reasonably well with expectations for what would be considered mandatory and non-mandatory programs and services
- However, we remain concerned with the timelines to implement the requirements of these changes (completion and maintenance of municipal agreements, strategies, plans and community advisory boards) and the additional administrative and financial resources required to meet these requirements both with the identified timelines and beyond

Director’s Comments:

Directors expressed concern regarding the proposed timeline for compliance (core mandates) set by Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) and suggest making a request for an extension to July, 2022 noting our limitations in resources.

BD-21-53

Stark – Burrell

“That the Board of Directors directs staff to submit a formal request to the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks to extend the proposed deadline of December 31, 2021 to July 1, 2022 for the completion and implementation of the Conservation Authority transition plans.”

CARRIED

BD-21-54

Burrell – Nemcek

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the comments on the “Regulatory Proposals (Phase 1) under the Conservation Authorities Act” (ERO#019-2986) and that these comments be endorsed for submission to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.”

CARRIED

Background:

- Lambton County Council received a presentation on June 2, 2021 from proponents of Peacekeeper Park, of which a copy was provided to the Board of Directors for review.
- County Council has requested that Conservation Authorities review the potential for the location of Peacekeeper Park on Conservation Authority owned lands (County Council has made similar requests to its member municipalities and interested private property owners)

- Peacekeeper Park was previously located at Lake Whittaker Conservation Area just east of Harrietsville, ON (a property owned by Kettle Creek Conservation Authority (KCCA))
- I was contacted by Board Members Marriott and Loosley both inform me of the request to investigate locations on CA property that would suit the needs as well as to seek some background information regarding KCCAs decision to ask Peacekeeper Park to vacate the property
- An excerpt from the KCCAs Board Meetings Agenda from December 16, 2020 as well as an excerpt from the Minutes of the same meeting were provided for review.
- Staff would like to schedule a meeting with the Peacekeeper Park proponents in order to obtain a full understanding of the Park needs
- Subsequently, staff will review Authority properties to determine what properties meet those needs, if any, and review any that do in comparison to Authority programs and report back to the Board

BD-21-55

Brown – Loosley

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated June 17, 2021 regarding Peacekeeper Park and further directs staff to meet with Peacekeeper Park representatives to determine their needs, review all Conservation Authority properties which could meet the identified needs and report back their findings to the Board of Directors.”

CARRIED

Conservation Area Servicing:

- Since the beginning of the pandemic, Authority staff have undertaken all reasonable measures to provide adequate servicing in our Conservation Areas
- Conservation Areas in our watershed were kept open to the public and were well used at the peak of the pandemic providing an outdoor retreat for peoples physical and mental health
- The Province and our local Health Units have provided guidelines throughout the pandemic to ensure that people are protected, including mask wearing, social distancing and facility maintenance
- Staff continue to provide the best available service with these guidelines; with the understanding of capabilities and available funding and the required maintenance for any available service
- Staff will be providing a range of plans for servicing our Conservation Areas through the remainder of 2021 in advance of the meeting for review and discussion

- An email, received on June 7th, 2021, with concerns brought forward regarding Highland Glen Conservation Area and the conditions and available services on June 6th, 2021 was reviewed.

Conservation Area Servicing Update - June 23:

- In cooperation with the Town of Plympton-Wyoming, porta-johns have been located at Highland Glen CA as of Friday June 18th
- The Conservation Authority is providing the porta-johns with weekly cleaning and pump out while Plympton-Wyoming will be provided the twice daily cleaning required under current provincial and local health guidelines
- Plympton-Wyoming has agreed to provide this service through August
- Understanding that we will hopefully be proceeding to the next Phase(s) of Reopening over the coming weeks – there is no link between the guidelines for washroom maintenance and the Phases of Reopening
- Therefore, it is unknown if any changes to the guidelines will be brought forward
- Other than the complaint from Mr. Dekker, provided via Board Member McEwen – no complaints regarding the availability of porta-johns have been received by either the Manager of Conservation Areas, Manager of Forestry or the General Manager
- Traditionally, porta-johns would also be located at Wawanosh CA and the Foundation's Keith McLean Conservation Lands
- Porta-johns have been included in the annual budgets for these properties at \$750.00 for the structure and weekly maintenance and pump-out for approximately 6 months
- Quotations for additional cleanings of porta-johns have been received providing a rate of \$35.00 per visit
- This roughly translates to \$2000.00/month for cleaning twice daily as well as the structure and weekly pump-outs
- Porta-johns have not been placed at Wawanosh or McLean this year due to the impracticality of required maintenance & cleaning
- Coldstream Conservation Area and Bridgeview Conservation Area are leased to Middlesex Centre and Petrolia respectively, each has washrooms that are open for public use

Proposed Servicing Plan

- As identified above, two porta-johns have been placed at Highland Glen Conservation Area under an Authority contract based on a 4 month contract which will fall within the budget for Highland Glen for 2021
- The contract includes once weekly maintenance and pump-out

- Plympton-Wyoming will provide twice daily cleaning of the porta-johns through at least August, at no cost to the Authority (this is greatly appreciated)
- As no concerns or issues have been brought forward to date in regards to Wawanosh or McLean, it is proposed that no porta-johns be placed at these properties in 2021 due to the required twice daily maintenance and the resulting financial costs which well exceed approved budgets
- Adjustments to the 2022 budget will be proposed with consideration for additional required cleaning procedures and further reviewed in the spring of 2022 prior to placement of porta-johns in Conservation Areas

Director's Comments:

Director Brad Loosley expressed concern regarding the delayed opening of St. Clair Conservation Areas after the Provincial and local health authorities authorized the opening of campgrounds. It was explained by General Manager, Brian McDougall that the reasoning for this delay was with public safety in mind. Within the provided notice of reopening, it was not possible to implement the health guidelines, including twice daily facility cleaning, and further it was not felt that a 'use at your own risk' approach was appropriate. Director and Vice-Chair, Larry Gordon commended the Conservation Authority's decision to delay the opening of campgrounds until the imposed regulations were able to be met safely, both financially and health-wise.

Director Brad Loosley suggested that the Conservation Authority consider deeding the Highland Glen Conservation Area to Plympton-Wyoming after boat launch repairs take place, with the agreement that the land remains a public park and boat launch. Director Brad Loosley requested a recorded vote on the motion to initiate discussion with Plympton-Wyoming.

Directors Lorie Scott and Terry Burrell expressed concern regarding the proposed motion to deed the park to the Town of Plympton-Wyoming, mentioning the park's unique features, regional status and responsibility as a regional organization. General Manager, Brian McDougall offered to provide a report to the Board of Directors on the history of the Conservation Areas and their various models funding support as well as an opportunity for the Director of Finance, Tracy Prince to provide information specific to each municipality in regards to their level of commitment, based on their assessed value, to repair the boat launch. Director Mark McGill enquired whether, failing to deed the land to Plympton-Wyoming, there are other oppourtunities to fund repairs, such as Provincial or Federal grants. It was explained that Water Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) funding was applied for, however the boat launch was not identified as a priority project to receive funding.

In reference to motion: BD-21-56

Director's Name	For	Against
Brennan, John	✓	
Broad, Alan	✓	
Brown, Pat	✓	
Burrell, Terry		✓
Dennis, Bill	✓	
Gordon, Larry		✓
Hall, Aaron	✓	
Kennes, Frank	✓	
Loosley, Brad	✓	
MacKinnon, Betty Ann	✓	
Marriott, Kevin	✓	
McEwen, Netty	✓	
McGill, Mark		✓
McMillan, Dan	✓	
Miller, Steve (absent during vote)	-	-
Nemcek, Frank	✓	
Scott, Lorie		✓
Stark, Mike	✓	
Westgate, Jerry	✓	
Faas, Joe	✓	
Total	15	4

BD-21-56

Loosley – Stark

“That the Board of Directors direct staff to initiate discussion with the Town of Plympton-Wyoming in regards to the Highland Glen Conservation Area and the possibility of deeding the property to their ownership and operation, with a conditional agreement to repair the boat launch prior to a change of ownership, and also that the lands be maintained as a public park and boat launch.”

CARRIED

BD-21-57

Burrell – McEwen

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the correspondence received and sent by the General Manager regarding conditions at Highland Glen Conservation Area and further approves the servicing plan for Conservation Areas in the St. Clair Region including the compliance with the guidelines for maintaining washrooms as provided by Provincial and local health authorities.”

CARRIED

A verbal update was provided by General Manager, Brian McDougall. The main focus of the meeting was the review of proposed comments regarding the regulatory proposals made by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) and the shared

concern for financial support and timing to complete set out tasks. The council also discussed additional mandated programs for review by MECP as well as the requests for data sharing from Ontario Hydro and comments on the various stewardship programs involving easements.

BD-21-58

Miller – Gordon

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the verbal update on the June 21, 2021 Conservation Ontario Council meeting.”

CARRIED

Director’s Comments:

Director and Vice Chair, Larry Gordon highlighted the following reports within the consent agenda:

- **Item 8.1 (c)** – A recent presentation on the ongoing clean-up efforts along the St. Clair River and study of historical contamination provided eye-opening findings and important revelations, namely the significant decrease of mercury contamination on the surface. Director of Water Resources, Girish Sankar provided a brief synopsis of the project and plans to bring a draft version of the engineering report to the Board of Directors by early 2022.
- **Item 8.1 (f)** – It was noted that this year’s tree planting program saw the highest landowner participation in over a decade. Manager of Conservation Services, Steve Shaw spoke regarding the success of the tree planting program despite the various challenges this year has brought.
- **Item 8.1 (o)** – Scholarship recipients were congratulated and wished well as they continue in their studies.

BD-21-58

McMillan – Brennan

“That the Board of Directors approves the consent agenda and endorses the recommendations accompanying Items 8.1 a - 8.1 p.”

CARRIED

The report on business arising was reviewed.

8.1 (a) That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report on Business Arising dated June 14, 2021.

Watershed Conditions

Water levels on the surrounding Great Lakes and Lake St. Clair saw continued rise in past years, exceeding record levels in 2019 and again in 2020, only to be followed by a

significant drop in water levels and low precipitation into 2021. The stark difference can be attributed to long-term precipitation trends.

As illustrated above, monthly precipitation anomalies have been predominately strongly positive since January 2017. This above-normal precipitation greatly impacted the surrounding water bodies, leading to increases in water levels over the last several years. In mid-April of 2020, precipitation anomalies shifted into negative values and have predominately remained below-normal to date. When comparing monthly mean water levels on Lake Huron and Lake St. Clair, water level fluctuations appear to follow precipitation trends with a lag of about a year. As a result, water levels in 2021 have been dropping in response to lower than normal precipitation which occurred in 2020.

In May 2021, SCRCA staff declared a Low Water Level 1 in response to below normal precipitation trends across the region. Precipitation amounts at localized gauges within the watershed showed precipitation trends below 80% of normal. Low Water Response is a provincial program through the MNR; Level 1 is an early indication of a potential drought condition and is categorized by an area reporting precipitation below 80% of normal (i.e. average) amounts for a period of 3 or 18 months. Neighbouring Conservation Authorities have also declared low water statuses.

Levels have been subsiding since late 2020 and have remained static through the spring, despite the typical cyclical nature of the water levels, where levels typically rise in spring. Water level projections for Lake Huron show a continued fall in levels over the next six months.

Lake Michigan-Huron

- In May, the average water level was 45.7 cm (18 inches) above the long-term average and 43.2 cm (17 inches) below its record high set in May 2020
- Water level forecasts predict the lake will begin its seasonal rise in June and peak in July, with water levels predicted to be 48.3 cm to 71.1 cm (19 to 28 inches) below record high levels through November
- Between June and November, water levels are predicted to remain 33 cm to 38 cm (13 to 15 inches) above long-term average levels

Lake St. Clair

- The lake continued its seasonal rise from April to May, rising 2.54 cm (1 inch)
- In May, the average water level was 43.2 cm (17 inches) above the long-term average level and 40.6 cm (16 inches) below the May 2020 level
- The six-month forecast predicts the lake will begin its seasonal decline in June, with water levels 43.2 cm to 61 cm (17 to 24 inches) below record high levels and 33 cm to 35.6 cm (13 to 14 inches) above long-term average levels

8.1 (b) That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated June 11, 2021 on the current watershed conditions and Great Lakes water levels.

The St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA) is continuing to work with Parsons Inc. on the development of an engineering and design plan for managing contaminated sediment in three priority areas of the St. Clair River. Regularly scheduled Sediment Management Oversight Committee teleconferences continue to be held to provide the committee with updates on the project work and to seek input on any proposed changes to the scope of work.

Field activities were completed by Parsons in fall, 2019; summer, 2020; and fall, 2020. The work included:

- Water velocity measurements at 15 locations, and grain size analysis of sediment at 10 locations to assess sediment stability,
- The collection of sediment samples from 99 locations to assess the horizontal and vertical extent of mercury contaminated sediment in each priority area,
- A bathymetry survey to measure sediment surface elevations in the targeted areas.

Update:

After assessing the extensive amount of new data that was collected, in conjunction with historical data, the consultant concluded that:

- There are no measurable risks to fish presented by mercury in sediment.
- The risk-based goal of an average of 3 mg/kg mercury in the surface sediment has already been met in each Priority Area and at the two Buried Deposits.
- There have been significant decreases in mercury concentrations in surface sediment compared to historical results due to natural recovery.
- Re-exposure of the subsurface buried mercury is unlikely.
- An Erosion Resistant Cover is recommended in focused areas within Priority Areas 1, 2 and 3 to enhance erosion protection and decrease mercury concentrations at the surface.
- The planned remedial actions will achieve the sediment management goals and remedial action objectives.

Next Steps:

Activity	Timing
Virtual Information Sessions to Create Awareness of the Recommended Remedial Approach Aamjiwnaang First Nation Environment Committee, Walpole Island First Nation Heritage Centre Committee, Key Stakeholders (Agencies, Industries, Municipalities), Community, Canadian RAP Implementation Committee]	June 2021
Posting of Virtual Community Information Session to Conservation Authority Website	July 2021

Consultant's Submission of Draft Engineering and Design Report	August 2021
Consultant's Submission of Final Engineering and Design Report	November 2021
Acceptance of Final Engineering and Design Report	December 2021
Implementation of Engineering and Design Plan	To Be Determined

8.1 (c) That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated June 10, 2021 and support the on-going project work so that an engineering and design plan for the management of the contaminated sediment can subsequently be completed as planned.

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, Indigenous peoples, 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 December 2020 board report:

- Non-point Source Working Group meeting held December 11, 2020
- Point Source Working Group meeting held March 30, 2021
- Conducting/compiling research and collecting data based on direction from committees
- Data analysis and mapping
- Writing and editing draft management plan
- Submitted annual reporting
- Sharing data with university researchers
- Exploring potential projects with municipal staff/working group members
- Undertook WISKI (water quality program) training
- Attended local virtual rural water quality and Indigenous community-led events
- Participating on the Lake Erie Action Plan Implementation Committee; Agricultural and Natural Heritage Subcommittees

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.

2021 Lake Erie Harmful Algal Bloom Forecast:

As of June 9, [NOAA and Heidelberg University are projecting](#) that the severity of the 2021 harmful algal bloom on Lake Erie will be <5 on a scale of 10. Unimpeded overland runoff and overflows during the non-growing season are a major driver of phosphorus loads. Due to below average rainfall early this spring, the bloom for 2021 is expected to be less severe than average.

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

For 2021-22, the SCRCA is continuing to coordinate the development of the Sydenham Watershed Phosphorus Management Plan with \$50,000 in financial support from Environment and Climate Change Canada.

8.1 (d) That the Board of Directors acknowledges the update dated June 9, 2021 regarding the Sydenham River Watershed Phosphorus Management Plan.

SCRCA's Biology Department and Conservation Services delivers a habitat stewardship program for landowners throughout the watershed to assist with the implementation of various habitat projects and agricultural best management practices (BMPs) to maintain/improve water quality and to create wildlife habitat. The Healthy Watershed Program has restored or enhanced over 1,000 ha of land, and over 4 million trees have been 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.

To encourage uptake and implementation of BMPs amongst farmers and rural landowners within our watershed, SCRCA provides relevant information regarding the building of soil health and water quality through workshops, conferences, newsletters and social media. To ensure we share good quality information to landowners, we have established various partnerships within the agricultural and research communities.

Outreach:

In March, Roland Eveleens, a University of Windsor Master's student joined the Biology department as a FishCAST Intern for a 16-week term. FishCAST is a co-curricular training program designed by experts and funded by Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council to train graduate students in the fisheries and aquatic sciences. Have you seen his posts on our social media - #musselmonday, #treetuesday and #fishyfriday posts? Roland and his research were featured in the last Conservation Update and he'll be presenting his Master's research at the June board meeting. Roland also helped stewardship staff refresh all our BMP factsheets – be on the lookout on our website for the latest editions on the Grants for Landowners page.

We've released 3 videos on our YouTube page promoting practices that individuals can implement to reduce erosion and promote soil health and healthy Great Lakes. We are working to create more video content – be sure to keep an eye out on our social media and YouTube channel.

1. A young farmer from Adelaide Metcalfe evaluating the cost benefit analysis of bio strips and cover crops. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSaTHkKnKEI>
2. A dune planting project at Ipperwash Beach in Lambton Shores and the value of planting native dune/beach grasses to reduce erosion. Within two weeks of posting, the video has already received 180 views. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cOLONvuWhrA>
3. Stewardship staff interviewed a bright young scientist from Lambton County (Grade 10) about her recent submission to the Youth Canada Science Fair on investigating a potential method to reduce Harmful Algal Blooms in Lake Erie. Her project has since placed Silver at the Canada-wide Fair. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnIL_HWMeIQ
4. Upcoming: Stewardship staff are working with drainage staff at the Municipality of Chatham-Kent to highlight drainage BMPs that have been implemented by landowners and drainage staff on a recent drain maintenance project.

On April 20, staff presented to the Strathroy Rotary Club about local stewardship projects that have been completed in the Sydenham River watershed.

Grants:

Staff have been busy completing the year-end reports for the DFO Canadian Nature Fund (\$300,475), OMAFRA COA (\$73,000), and ECCO EcoAction (\$49,000).

Staff have submitted an application for a community tree-planting event at Bridgeview in September to TD Tree Days with Town of Petrolia for \$5,500.

An application to Ontario Community Environment Fund was submitted for \$80,000. This application included partnering with Town of Plympton-Wyoming on a reforestation project; with the Upperwash Phrag Phighters on wetland enhancements at the Tanner Swale in Upperwash in Lambton Shores, and working with landowners throughout our watershed to implement tree planting, wetland and erosion control projects. A portion of this funding, should it be approved will support the Biology Water Quality Monitoring Program and support a bank stabilization project at the Warwick Reservoir.

New Additions to the Biology Crew:

We have two new crew working with the Biology Crew until March 31, 2022. Sarah Snetsinger and Alexis Hand will be assisting with turtle, mussel, benthic, and fish monitoring, reporting and analysis. We also are welcoming Dominique Rumball from Dr. Nick Mandrak's lab at the University of Toronto, Scarborough in mid-July for a few months. There is a LOT of monitoring to be completed this year, so we are very grateful for these additions. Welcome to the team!

It's Turtle Season!

Turtles in Southwestern Ontario have begun laying their nests. Our biology crew are scouting daily to rescue eggs at risk of survival. To date, over 400 eggs from spiny softshell, Northern map, and snapping turtles have been collected to incubate.

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.

8.1 (e) That the Board of Directors acknowledges the update dated June 4, 2021 regarding the Healthy Watersheds Program.

- Spring 2021 was the highest landowner participation year in more than a decade for both the seedling afforestation program and the large stock tree order program.
- Demand for tree seedlings for over the counter sales was nearly 2.5 times the normal amount with 83 landowners throughout the watershed purchasing more than 14,000 trees.
- Another 65,000 trees were planted throughout the watershed for 29 landowners.
- 79,000 tree seedlings arrived by transport truck a week and half late on April 30th and where unloaded into our cold storage facility.
- Two mechanical tree planting crews and one small hand planting crew worked for 3 weeks to finish planting all the trees before the end of May.
- SCRCA provided \$193,000 in grant dollars to landowners this spring through 5 individual grant agencies with landowners contributing \$104,000 toward their projects.
- There were 26 individual tree orders for 1,433 large potted stock trees this spring in excess of \$30,000 in value.
- Four municipalities participated in this year's program. Plympton-Wyoming, Village of Newbury, Brooke-Alvinston and Warwick Township.
- Trees ordered by Warwick and Brooke-Alvinston made up more than half of the number of trees ordered. Both municipalities had a list of many more resident landowners purchasing trees. This partnership between the SCRCA and the municipalities seems to be a very effective method of reaching out to many more people to plant trees.

8.1 (f) That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated June 8, 2021 regarding spring 2020 tree planting on private, corporate and public lands.

- Catch basin larvicide treatments to reduce mosquito populations in all rural and urban areas within the County of Lambton and the City of Sarnia will start in late June and end in mid-August. SCRCA staff will be working under the direction of Lambton Public Health during the treatment operations again this year.
- Catch basins located within Aamjiwnaang south of Sarnia will be treated under a separate contract pending approval for funding from Health Canada.
- Permits to treat surface water are obtained from the MECP under the Authority's Pesticide Operators Licence, Insurance and staff exterminator's licences.
- Pre-treatment larvae sampling (dipping) is scheduled for the week of June 14th. If mosquito larvae activity is low, a second sampling will be conducted the following week.
- Larvae dipping results are sent to Lambton Public Health and mosquito activity levels will be used to determine the treatment start date. Approval from the Lambton Medical Officer of Health is required before treatments can commence.

- Catch basins will be treated with methoprene in pellet formulation. Methoprene is a growth regulator which prevents mosquito larva from becoming biting adults. There will be three separate larvicide applications set at 21-day intervals starting around June 25th and finishing around the 20th of August.
- Public notice of pesticide application will be posted in several local newspapers across the County of Lambton.
- SCRCA staff will also be conducting efficacy tests throughout the summer as part of the treatment program by collecting mosquito pupa samples every 15-17 days. Pupa are monitored for adult emergence. Past efficacy tests show an average of 80% to 85% effectiveness for controlling adult mosquito emergence.

8.1 (g) That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated June 8, 2021 regarding the treatment of catch basins with a larvicide in Lambton County's rural and urban areas.

The Regulations Activity Reports on "Development, Interference with Wetlands & Alterations to Shorelines & Watercourses" Regulations (Ontario Regulation 171/06), for the period of April 1, 2021 to May 31, 2021 was reviewed.

8.1 (h) 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 June 9, 2020 and includes the period April 1, 2021 to May 31, 2021, as presented.

The planning activity summary reports for the period April 1, 2021 to May 31, 2021 was reviewed.

8.1 (i) That the Board of Directors acknowledges the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority's monthly Planning Activity Summary Reports, dated June 10, 2021 for April and May, 2021.

The revenue and expenditure report to May 31, 2021 was reviewed.

8.1 (j) That the Board of Directors acknowledges the revenue and expenditure report to May 31, 2021, as it relates to the budget.

The status report on the 2021 general levy receipts to May 31, 2021 was reviewed.

8.1 (k) That the Board of Directors acknowledges the status report on the 2021 general levy receipts to May 31, 2021.

The investment statements to May 31, 2021 were reviewed.

8.1 (l) That the Board of Directors acknowledges the financial investment statements through May 31, 2021.

St. Clair Challenge – Virtual Fundraiser

To celebrate the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority's (SCRCA) 60th Anniversary, the SCRCA will be launching the first-ever St. Clair Challenge – a virtual event that will encourage our watershed residents to get out and explore the natural areas in our region – all while raising funds to support local conservation efforts.

Between July 1st and August 31st, individuals can challenge themselves to run, walk, hike, bike, or paddle along trails or waterways located in the SCRCA watershed. Participants will be able to register for one of our distance challenges by visiting our website at www.scrca.on.ca or through Race Roster (www.raceroster.com; search for St. Clair Challenge). From there, participants can create their own personal pages where they can track their adventures and invite people to donate to their fundraising goal.

Fundraising efforts and donations will support the St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation's mission of supporting the conservation programs of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority. The Foundation supports a number of the Authority's programs including conservation education, tree planting, wetland creation, species at risk research, and upgrades to local conservation area facilities and amenities.

The fundraiser will be promoted through media releases to local news outlets and social media. Participants are not restricted to completing their distance challenges on SCRCA owned properties. If our member municipalities would like to have their natural areas promoted during this event, please direct the appropriate staff to Donna Blue, Manager of Communications at dblue@scrca.on.ca or at (519) 245-3710 Ext. 219.

60th Anniversary Social Media Campaign

The SCRCA's 60th Anniversary social media campaign continued since its launch in March. The campaigns have been developed to celebrate the SCRCA's 60th Anniversary and highlight the history and evolution of Authority programs and services. Recent campaigns focussed on the Authority's Maple Syrup Festival and Conservation Education, and Tree Planting.

May 2-7, 2021

Maple Syrup Festival and Conservation Education

May 24-28, 2021

Tree Planting

Media and Social Media Analytics:

In order to continually improve upon our activities related to local media outlets and social media, communications staff will be reviewing analytics to help assess our communications efforts.

The following statistics cover the timeframe from April 1, 2021, to May 31, 2021:

Media Relations

Activity	2021 (April – May)	2020 (April – May)
Media Releases	5	7
News Article	45	70
Mentions		

Social Media

Facebook

Activity	Total	2021 (April – May)	2020 (April – May)
New Likes	1,803	45	128
New Followers	1,831	48	9
Posts	--	67	67

Twitter

Activity	Total	2021 (April – May)	2020 (April – May)
Tweets	--	66	52
Retweets	--	23	42
New Followers	734	14	29
Engagements*	--	592	681

* Engagements = clicks, retweets, replies, follows, and likes

8.1 (m) That the Board of Directors acknowledges the Communications Update report, dated June 9, 2021.

Spring Education Program Summary

St. Clair Conservation's Education Team continues to innovate and adapt. With schools closed and all learning being done on-line, the Education Team is very busy delivering 'Live-Stream with a Naturalist' programs. A total of eleven 'Live-Stream' options provide teachers from Kindergarten through Grade 12 with engaging, real-time Conservation Education opportunities. The SCRCA is fully booked until the end of the school year and expect to 'see' a total of 4,000 students by the end of June. For a full list of our current programs check www.scrca.on.ca/govirtual.

French Programming Summary

Since January 2021, the SCRCA has been offering live-stream programs to French and French immersion schools, which has become popular with both teachers and school

boards. Schools from Chatham, through to the GTA and all the way to Ottawa have participated and have provided great feedback. Between the maple syrup program offered in the spring to the pond studies and biodiversity hikes currently being run, approximately 1,000 French and French immersion students have been reached.

Live-Stream from the Canoe Pilot Program

On June 1st, students from the Lambton Kent District School Board (LKDSB) Virtual School were invited to participate in 'Live-Stream from the Canoe' webinars with the SCRCA. LKDSB Virtual School approached St. Clair to offer this equitable opportunity to all their students. Over the course of the day, 3 webinars were delivered – one for Kindergarten to Grade 3, one for Grade 4 to Grade 8, and a third for all Virtual French Immersion Students. Overall, 48 teachers and approximately 1,300 students participated in the Pilot Program. Looking forward, LKDSB virtual school will be booking additional webinars with St. Clair in the fall of 2021. Benefits gained by this pilot include, expanding St. Clair's reach by 'meeting' new teachers, and ensuring inclusion in the 2021-2022 Virtual School program.

Western Lake Erie Student Summit Project

In partnership with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (and 4 other Conservation Authorities from Southwestern Ontario), the St. Clair Education Team worked with students in both the SCRCA and Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA) watersheds as part of the 'Western Lake Erie Student Summit', funded by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP). Students participating in this virtual summit project were first engaged in the 'classroom' to learn more about Western Lake Erie and the issues the Lake faces. Students were then tasked with innovating new ways to address these issues. Finally, the students from 15 schools across the Western Lake Erie watershed met June 2nd and June 9th at the virtual Western Lake Erie Student Summit to share their ideas and continue their Lake Erie learning.

Great Lakes Virtual Field Trip Project

The St. Clair Education Team has completed the Huron-Erie Corridor Great Lakes Virtual Field Trip, funded by Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP). The project was launched April 29th, 2021. To date the Huron-Erie Corridor Virtual Field Trip has been 'viewed' by approximately 550 teachers/students/community members. The response from MECP has been very positive, and the St. Clair Conservation Education Team has been invited to participate in upcoming webinars speaking to MECP and other organizations to promote the Virtual Field Trip and broaden the reach of this project. To view the Huron-Erie Corridor Virtual Field Trip visit <https://bit.ly/GLHuron-ErieCorridor>.

Virtual Field Trips

To date, approximately 900 students have benefited from the Virtual Field Trip subscriptions. In addition, these Virtual Field Trips created during the spring of 2020, have proven to be useful tools to enhance other education programs. For example, the 'Flooding 101' program was shared with all Spring Water Awareness Workshop participants, as an opportunity for the teacher to extend learning.

Kettle and Stony Point First Nation – Canadian Nature Fund, Year 3

Although in-person sessions between students at Hillside School and St. Clair's Education Team have been interrupted by COVID-19, many aspects of this project have proceeded. The relationship growth between this First Nation school and the SCRCA are difficult to quantify, however some interesting highlights include: an invitation to 'partner' in all aspects of the development of Hillside's 'Land-Based' education initiative, an invitation to observe the Principal while delivering traditional knowledge to students, and an invitation to participate in community events, including a memorial held June 3rd for Hillside students to process and begin to heal from the Kamloops residential 'school' tragedy. In an effort to connect with the students, the SCRCA will be offering 'Live-Stream with a Naturalist' programs to each class in the school June 22nd and June 23rd.

8.1 (n) That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated June 9, 2021 on the Conservation Education Progress Report.

SCRCA Conservation Scholarship Program 2021:

Every year, four scholarships are available to graduating high school students who are pursuing post-secondary studies in an environmental field (e.g., biology, ecology, agriculture, etc.). Eligible students must live in or attend a secondary school within the SCRCA boundary.

The applications are scored based on marks; interest and activities as they relate to conservation and the environment; future studies as they relate to conservation and the environment; reference letter(s); and other comments offered by the applicant.

Applications for the 2021 SCRCA scholarships were due on May 31, 2021. In total, 10 applications were received. The applications were reviewed by a committee established by the St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation consisting of Norm Giffen, Archie Kerr, Brian McDougall, and Donna Blue. The Foundation Board of Directors approved the recommended scholarship recipients at their meeting on June 3, 2021.

The following awards will be presented in the coming weeks.

A.W. Campbell Memorial Scholarship (\$1000):

- Zachary Zavitz, Strathroy District Collegiate Institute, Strathroy
- Nicole Guthrie, Northern Collegiate Institute and Vocational School, Sarnia

Tony Stranak Conservation Scholarship (\$500):

- Johanna Ni Xiu DeKoning, Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School, Strathroy

Mary Jo Arnold Conservation Scholarship (\$500):

- Lucie Slakmon, Northern Collegiate Institute and Vocational School, Sarnia

In recognition of the SCRCA's 60th Anniversary, the Foundation generously approved an additional \$2,000 in scholarship funding that will be distributed between all ten applicants as a one-time "60th Anniversary Bursary".

8.1 (o) That the Board of Directors acknowledges the 2021 Scholarship Program report dated June 8, 2021.

RAP Coordination

On March 9, 2021, a letter was submitted to the AOC Annex leads to consider the redesignation of the *Fish Tumours and Other Deformities* Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) from *Requires Further Assessment* (RFA) to *Not Impaired*. An unofficial announcement was made at the CRIC meeting on June 8, 2021 that the redesignation has been supported and that an official memo is being drafted. Upon receipt of this memo, this BUI will be redesignated to *not impaired*.

The Initial Draft Status Assessment Report for BUI 9-*Restrictions on Drinking Water Consumption or Taste and Odour Problems* was presented to the Canadian RAP Implementation Committee (CRIC) on June 8, 2021. The report is now under review and will be updated for a formal decision at the next CRIC meeting. This BUI is currently considered *impaired*, and the report recommends redesignation to *not impaired*.

The Initial Draft Status Assessment Report for BUI 3-*Degraded Fish and Wildlife Populations* was presented to the Canadian RAP Implementation Committee (CRIC) on June 8, 2021. The report is under review and will be updated for a formal decision at the next CRIC meeting. This BUI is currently considered *requires further assessment*, and the report recommends redesignation to *not impaired*.

Meetings

Canadian RAP Implementation Committee (CRIC)

- June 8, 2021 – Teleconference
- Next Meeting: TBD

Friends of the St. Clair River (FOSCR)

- April 7, 2021 – Special Meeting – Teleconference
- May 11, 2021 – Special Meeting – Teleconference
- June 7, 2021– Teleconference
- Next Meeting: June 28, 2021 – Signage Project Sub-committee - Teleconference

Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC)

- May 4, 2021 – Teleconference
- Next Meeting: TBD

Events

Due to restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the St. Clair River Science Symposium was converted to a 3-part virtual series for 2021-22. The first session was held on April 21, 2021 from 6:30pm-7:30pm and was attended by 42 individuals. The event recording is now available online at friendsofstclair.ca/symposium. Planning for the second virtual session is underway and will be held in early September.

Outreach and Engagement

A survey has been launched to collect information from individuals who fish the St. Clair River. This survey will collect information about fishing locations, fish consumption behaviors, and limited demographics about the individual. This survey supports the advancement of BUI 1- *Restrictions on Fish and Wildlife Consumption* and was identified as a deliverable in the 2017-2022 St. Clair River Area of Concern Workplan. The survey can be completed at friendsofstclair.ca/fishsurvey/.

A Story Map has been launched for the Canadian portion of the St. Clair River Area of Concern. This is an interactive, web-based communications tool that highlights the overall progress of the AOC, as well as details on many of the individual projects that have been completed along the river to support the restoration of each Beneficial Use impairment. The Story Map can be viewed at bit.ly/StClairAOC.

The Friends of St. Clair River and the RAP Office continue to partner on the production of St. Clair River News, a free monthly E-Newsletter. The goal of this newsletter is to increase awareness and engagement in the Area of Concern and highlight environmental initiatives happening in the region.

Links to Monthly Newsletters:

- [April 2021 E-Newsletter](#)
- [May 2021 E-Newsletter](#)

Strategic Objectives(s):

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

8.1 (p) That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report, dated June 10, 2021 on the St. Clair River Area of Concern.

The April and May, 2021 disbursements were reviewed.

BD-21-59**Burrell – Scott**

“That the Board of Directors approves the April and May, 2021 disbursements as presented in the amount of \$2,463,774.63.”

CARRIED

WECI 2021-2022 Projects:

- SCRCA had submitted seven projects for WECI 2021 - 2022 program
- A total of 85 projects have been submitted from 30 CA's
- All applications have been reviewed by a committee of Provincial and Conservation Authority staff representatives
- All submitted projects were scored based on established WECI scoring guidelines.
- SCRCA was **successful** in securing WECI funding for 3 projects

Structure	Project Name	Description of Work	Total Project Cost	Grant Requested
Sarnia Shoreline Protection	Shoreline Repair (Helen and Kenwick St) Phase 3A	Carry out Shoreline stabilization for Phase 3A	\$766,600	\$383,300
Head Street/ Coldstream Dams	Decommissioning Study	Study to consider decommissioning of the Head street and Coldstream dams	\$120,000	\$60,000
All Dam Structures	Engineering Inspection	Engineering Inspection of all authority owned dams	\$60,000	\$30,000

Director's Comments:

Director Mike Stark gave congratulations to Director of Water Resources, Girish Sankar and his department in respect to the WECI proposals and the 3 positive outcomes from those applications. Questions arose regarding low water levels and whether these conditions have been helpful or detrimental of the work being completed. Girish Sankar explained that the low water levels have provided a positive impact on the visibility of work being done and although Federal and Provincial approvals remain challenging to obtain, it has been found that pre-consultations have been helpful in moving projects forward.

BD-21-60

McMillan – Stark

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated June 11, 2021 on the updates to the WECI funding for 2021 - 2022 and further will assist staff in obtaining Municipal matching funds.”

CARRIED

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

- R&M Contractors was awarded the contract on January 21, 2021 for \$2,618,713.25 inclusive of HST.
- Shoreline construction work started on February 17, 2021
- All shoreline work has been completed as of June 9, 2021
- Construction work has been very smooth with no issues
- Restoration work is underway
- We continue to receive positive feedback from the City of Sarnia and its community members.

Old Lakeshore Road West

- Planning for the next phase of shoreline protection along Bright's Grove is underway
- This will include approximately 230 m of shoreline between Pine Avenue and Penhuron Drive
- Shoreplan Engineering Ltd has completed design work
- Permit applications will be submitted to MNRF and DFO by mid June
- Construction work is expected to start in October 2021.

Port Lambton Park

The project site is located in Port Lambton along the east shore of the St. Clair River. The site includes a shoreline starting at the north of Queen Street and stretches south a distance of approximately 240 meters. The current shoreline of the site includes varying structures, steel sheet pile, steel sheet pile wall supported by timber piles, concrete rubble, stacked concrete. The condition of the shoreline is poor and needs restoration.

SCRCA forwarded a selective RFP to consulting firms to provide a well-considered proposal for design services.

- SCRCA received two submissions for this design project.

Shoreplan Engineering Ltd	\$38,950 + HST
TRUE Consulting	\$39,953 + HST

- Staff recommend the acceptance of low tender submitted by Shoreplan Engineering Ltd for design services.

BD-21-61

Burrell – Gordon

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated June 9, 2021 on the status of Shoreline projects across the watershed and further approves the proposal from Shoreplan Engineering Ltd for design of new shore protection structure along Port Lambton Park.”

CARRIED

Under New Business

Director Brad Loosley brought forward the following carried motion from the Town of Petrolia, moved by Wade Deighton and seconded by Grant Purdy:

“WHEREAS the Council of the Town of Petrolia has defeated a support request from the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority, in relation to their board composition;

AND WHEREAS the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority is in the process of filling a vacated CAO position;

AND WHEREAS the Province has put into place new Legislation for all Conservation Authorities,

AND WHEREAS the present Conservation Authority consists of 20 members, compared to the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority who restructured a number of years ago and reduced their number on the Committee down to 9 members.

AND WHEREAS the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority has not considered restructuring for approximately 30 years.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT the Council of the Town of Petrolia request that the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority look into the possibility of restructuring the Committee from the 20 members, to 11 or 13 as a suggestion. AND THAT Mr. Bob Bailey MPP for Sarnia Lambton, the Conservation Authority, the County of Lambton and the Municipalities of Lambton be circulated this motion.”

Correspondence regarding this motion has been circulated to SCRCA member municipalities for inclusion on council agendas.

General Manager, Brian McDougall provided further comment regarding the changes in cabinet structure. In addition to the new Minister for the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has been added to the portfolio of the Ministry of Northern Development of Mines, now known as the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (MNDMNR), of which our flood control programs now fall under. It is hoped

that despite working with a larger scope of services, focus remains on our aspect of their business in flood response.

Director Netty McEwen announced that she will be replaced on the SCRCA Board of Directors by Town of Plympton-Wyoming council member, Tim Wilkins. Chair Joe Faas thanked Netty for her time on the board and wished her well with her continued work on council.

BD-21-62

Scott – Brown

“That the meeting be adjourned.”

CARRIED



Joe Faas
Chair



Brian McDougall
General Manager