



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: April 21, 2022

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Warwick Community Centre – 7074 Egremont Rd, Watford

Directors Present: Bill Dennis, Joe Faas, Greg Grimes, Frank Kennes, Brad Loosley, Kevin Marriott, Steve Miller, Frank Nemcek, Lorie Scott, Chair; Mike Stark, Jerry Westgate, Tim Wilkins

Directors Present (Remote): Diane Brewer, Al Broad, Pat Brown, Vice Chair; Terry Burrell, Betty Ann MacKinnon

Regrets: John Brennan, Aaron Hall

Staff Present: Donna Blue, Manager of Communications; Melissa Deisley, Director of Planning and Resources; Chris Durand, Manager of IT/GIS; Ashley Fletcher, Administrative Assistant/ Board Coordinator; Sarah Hodgkiss, Manager of Planning and Natural Heritage; Sarah Hume, Payroll/Accounting Clerk; Tim Payne, Manager of Forestry; Ken Phillips, General Manager; Girish Sankar, Director of Water Resources; Greg Wilcox, Manager of Conservation Areas

Guests: Ralph Coe, St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation; Craig Emptage and Yousef Nassereddine, Scotia Wealth Management; Tracy Prince (remote), Julie Welker, Thames-Sydenham and Region Drinking Water Source Protection (remote)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested that each Director declare a conflict of interest at the appropriate time, on any item within this agenda in that a Director may have pecuniary interest.

Formatting and structure changes to the meeting agenda were acknowledged.

BD-22-32

Dennis – Wilkins

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

CARRIED

A presentation of the Scotia Wealth Management investment portfolio was given by Craig Emptage and Yousef Nassereddine.

Directors Comments:

Directors requested clarification on the level of risk associated with investments made by the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA). The current SCRCA Investment policy dictates an 80/20 mix between low and medium risk investments, which was implemented to accommodate a particular holding which was, at the time, rated medium

to low-risk. The holding has since been re-rated to low-risk, and therefore the policy may be amended to permit 100% low-risk investments. It was stressed to directors that any investment, whether in stocks, bonds or GICs, will carry some level of risk. Explanation was also provided on the book value of the portfolio, which is comprised of the original capital value of \$426,000 plus any re-investments that have been made over the life of the portfolio. Current volatility within the market has restricted recent growth of the fund, however financial experts have commented on the future outlook of the market and believe it to be positive. Chair, Mike Stark enquired whether changes have been noted regarding the change in governance (i.e. on boarding of new General Manager and soon to be Director of Corporate Services) and requested that the investment policy statement be updated before October, 2022 and further, that comments be provided on the 80/20 percentage on holdings.

Mr. Emptage and Mr. Nassederrinne were thanked for their presentation and it was recommended that the Board of Directors revisit the SCRCA investment policy in the near future, which will be forwarded to both Scotia Wealth Management and BMO.

BD-22-33

Loosley – Scott

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the presentation provided by Scotia Wealth Management reviewing their investment strategy and options.”

CARRIED

The minutes of the Board of Directors meeting, held February 24, 2022 were reviewed.

BD-22-34

Scott – Miller

“That the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting, held February 24, 2022, be approved as distributed.”

CARRIED

The minutes of the Board of Directors special meeting, held March 31, 2022 were reviewed.

BD-22-35

Westgate – Kennes

“That the minutes of the Board of Directors special meeting, held March 31, 2022, be approved as distributed.”

CARRIED

The minutes of the Executive Committee meeting, held April 14, 2022 were reviewed.

Chair, Mike Stark explained the nature of the Executive Committee meeting and thanked committee members for expressing their varied opinions.

BD-22-36

Scott – Brown

“That the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting, held April 14, 2022, be approved as distributed.”

CARRIED

Operations

- A return-to-work plan was put in place commencing April 4, 2022 that will see the head office fully staffed by the beginning of May. Staff are currently working on a two-week rotating cycle so that they can re-acclimatize themselves to an office setting and to allow time for refinements to be made to the plan so that can staff safety can be ensured.

Community/Partnership Outreach

- SCRCA has been participating in BASES upcoming Emergency Preparedness Week planning with the General Manager attending bi-weekly committee Zoom meetings. He will also be attending the debriefing session on May 3, 2022.
- GM made a presentation to the Strathroy Rotary Club on SCRCA’s role in flood mitigation, water quality monitoring and water quantity monitoring. SCRCA staff will also participate in the Rotary Club’s community clean-up event in Strathroy on April 23, 2022.
- Attended a meeting via Zoom on March 31, 2022 organized by BASES with representatives of the Lambton-Kent District School Board with regard to how we can collectively increase our capacity to provide experiential education in the region. SCRCA with be arranging further meetings with both organizations in the immediate future.

Federal/Provincial/Municipal Meetings

- Attended a meeting via Zoom March 8, 2022 with MECP staff to share information on issues within the SCRCA watershed and how the two organizations can best collaborate to work effectively on enforcement issues.
- Attended a multi-stakeholder meeting via Zoom with regard to the Lake Erie Action Plan on March 10, 2022.
- Attended a Road Salt Workshop session via Zoom hosted by the MPP Andrea Khanjin, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks on March 15, 2022. Participants were asked to provide input into minimizing the impact of road salt on the environment.
- MOU information sessions were held March 21 and March 22, 2022 with municipal staff via Zoom. Additional sessions are being set up for those that were unable to attend.
- Attended a BACP meeting via Zoom on March 23, 2022 regarding updates to the St. Clair River Area of Concern.
- Attended LEAP meeting via Zoom on April 5, 2022. Meeting centered around phosphorus issues.

- Attended an OMAFRA Agricultural Sector Working Group meeting via Zoom on April 11, 2022. Meeting focused on effectiveness of cover crops.

Conservation Ontario

- Attended Conservation Ontario Asset Management Workshop via Zoom on April 1, 2022. SCRCA will provide staff to assist in CO subcommittees on this topic moving forward.
- Attended Conservation Ontario Annual General Meeting along with Vice-Chair Pat Brown via Zoom on April 11, 2022. The CO report is included within the board package.

Director's Comments:

Director Frank Kennes enquired regarding the status of SCRCA in relation to a return to work plan. General Manager (GM), Ken Phillips informed that staff are split between full-time in office and rotating days in office. Staff are following the COVID-19 standard operating procedures, including masking when away from their personal desks. Some concerns have been forwarded regarding office ventilation. Staff are able to move to alternate work spaces within the office, if not comfortable at their own desk, and staff are encouraged to open windows to increase ventilation.

BD-22-37

Kennes – Grimes

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the General Manager’s report, dated April 12, 2022.”

CARRIED

Meeting Report

- Vice Chair, Pat Brown and General Manager, Ken Phillips attended the Conservation Ontario (CO) AGM via Zoom. Allan Revill from Cataraqui Conservation was acclaimed as Chair for 2022 and Alan Dale from Upper Thames Conservation was acclaimed as a Vice Chair for 2022. One Vice Chair position remains vacant.
- CO presented its 2021 Financial Statements and noted that there was an anticipated \$25,000 surplus that will be placed in the Unrestricted Fund Reserve. The auditors declared it to be a clean audit with no issues observed.
- CO General Manager, Kim Gavine provided an update on the BC flood situation and response from conservation authorities to aid. SCRCA was one of 18 CAs that committed staff, Girish Sankar and Emily De Cloet, to assist in the flood emergency if necessary.
- CO will be distributing Election Kits to all CAs which will contain talking points/questions for candidates in the upcoming Ontario election in June.
- CO will be providing guidance to CAs by September 2022 with regard to the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act and what, if any, changes may need to be made to CA by-laws.

The Conservation Ontario 2021 Annual Report was also reviewed.

BD-22-38

MacKinnon – Scott

“That the Board of Directors receive for information the report dated April 12, 2022 concerning the April 11, 2022 Conservation Ontario Annual General Meeting.”

CARRIED

Background:

Under the business arising from the February 10, 2022 meeting of the Executive Committee, the status of public accessibility for SCRCA committee meetings was called into question.

As per SCRCA Administrative By-Law No. 1-2018, Item 4.5 Meetings Open to the Public, “All meetings of the General Membership and Executive Committee shall be open to the public. A meeting or part of a meeting may be closed to the public if the subject matter being considered is identified in the closed meeting section of the agenda and the subject matter meets the criteria for a closed meeting as defined in this By-law. Notice of all regular or special meetings of the General Membership or its Committees shall be made available to the public as soon as possible after its delivery to General Membership.”

Traditionally, notice of SCRCA general membership meetings are made available under the events page of our website. A full listing of meetings, including those of the various committees, is included as part of the annual general meeting package and its approved, published minutes. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and the declared State of Emergency, the general public were welcomed to observe meetings in person. Since moving to an electronic meeting format, general membership meetings have been both live-streamed and recorded. Committee meetings have not been live-streamed or recorded, however, the minutes of all committees (with the exception of closed “in-camera” session minutes) are included in the public board package of subsequent general membership meetings. This is in line with SCRCA Administrative By-Law No. 1-2018 Item 3.14 *Advisory Boards and Other Committees*, “Each advisory board or committee shall report to the general membership, presenting any recommendations made by the advisory board or committee, and that the dates of all advisory board and committee meetings shall be made available to all members of the Authority.”

A survey of neighbouring Conservation Authorities revealed some differences in practice.

The SCRCA is committed to improving governance, accountability and transparency. In adherence to the legislative requirements under the Conservation Authorities Act, SCRCA meetings, agendas, minutes, governing by-laws and municipal agreements shall be made public. In an effort to enhance the accessibility of our meeting materials, it is recommended that Executive Committee meeting dates be added to the SCRCA website, along with the agenda, contents and written minutes posted separate from general membership meetings.

BD-22-39

Burrell – Loosley

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated February 16, 2022 regarding St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA) meetings open to the public and further accepts the recommendation that all Executive Committee meetings be announced publicly, live-streamed and recorded (if held virtually), with the exception of meetings where the subject matter being considered is identified in the closed meeting section of the agenda and the subject matter meets the criteria for a closed meeting as defined in the SCRCA Administrative By-laws.”

CARRIED

The SCRCA Investment Policy was reviewed.

Director’s Comments:

It is requested that SCRCA Administration provide a report on whether a review of the SCRCA investment policy is needed.

BD-22-40

Lorie – Kennes

“That the Board of Directors requests a report from Administration by November 10, 2022 on the SCRCA Investment Policy with recommendations regarding any necessary updates.”

CARRIED

The SCRCA Investment Policy was reviewed.

Director’s Comments:

Director Al Broad expressed his satisfaction with the professional management provided by Scotia Wealth Management, as well as with the performance of the fund. Vice Chair, Pat Brown noted that a presentation from BMO on their investment portfolio will be coming forth to the June meeting.

BD-22-41

Kennes – Nemcek

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges receipt of the investment policy, approved by the Board of Directors in 2014.”

In December, 2021, the Board of Directors accepted the recommendation of the Highland Glen Committee to change the designation of Highland Glen Conservation Area to a local/rural CA and directed staff to begin discussions with the Town of Plympton-Wyoming regarding the transition of ownership of Highland Glen to the Municipality.

The Committee recommendations were as follows.

Stark – Loosley

“That the Committee recommends to the SCRCA Board of Directors the re-designation of the Highland Glen Conservation Area from a Regional to Local Conservation Area and that the property ownership and maintenance be ceded to the Municipality of Plympton-Wyoming through steps as recommended by Administration using the McEwen property as a model, under the same condition that the lands remain a public domain and further, that no funding, beyond the approved 2022 budget, be provided by the Authority to rehabilitate the boat launch.”

Memorandum of Agreement:

The proposed start date of the agreement is June 1, 2022. The agreement would last 5 years, with a 5-year renewal term. Under the Conservation Authorities Act, lease agreements cannot exceed 5-year terms. The C.J. McEwen agreement was used as a template to create this agreement.

Re-Allocation of Highland Glen CA Approved Capital Funding:

The Town of Plympton-Wyoming staff have been in discussions with Authority staff regarding the possible re-allocation of approved 2022 Highland Glen funding to the Municipality. Discussions have included both the \$31,000 in approved capital repairs/improvements and operating expenses that would be reduced when the Municipality assumes the responsibility of maintaining the property. (Anticipated June 1, 2022)

The Board of Directors had previously committed to \$31,000 in budgeted repairs including beach access stairs, and repairs to the existing breakwater structures. The Municipality is developing a strategy to rehabilitate the boat ramp facility and would like to see the approved funding provided to the Municipality for the priorities they determine will most effectively rehabilitate the facility. This would be the most efficient use of funds, as it would eliminate the duplication of efforts by the two organizations.

A lease agreement commencing June 1, 2022, would reduce the expenses incurred by the Authority by an anticipated \$9,220 in 2022. These expenses would be the responsibility of the Municipality. Plympton-Wyoming has inquired about re-allocating these savings to the Municipality to be used for facility repairs at Highland Glen Conservation Area.

At the time this report was created, no official request for re-allocating funds had been received.

Financial Impact:

The agreement with the Municipality is consistent with all other Conservation Area lease agreements. The Municipality will be responsible for all costs associated with the property.

The \$31,000 approved budget for repairs would not change, but provided to the Municipality for use towards Highland Glen facility repairs.

A lease agreement commencing June 1, 2022, would reduce the expenses incurred by the Authority by an anticipated \$9,220 in 2022. These expenses were included in the budget as general levy, as the 2022 budget was passed prior to re-designating Highland Glen as a local/rural Conservation Area.

The draft lease agreement was also reviewed.

BD-22-42

Brown - Wilkins

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 5, 2022 regarding the Highland Glen Conservation Area lease agreement and re-allocation of 2022 approved budget funding, and further approve the Memorandum of Agreement with the Town of Plympton-Wyoming for the operation of the Highland Glen Conservation Area.”

CARRIED

Risk Management and Land Classification Guideline:

The key desired objectives of SCRCA’s Risk Management Guideline are:

- Recognize, prioritize, and mitigate risk and liability exposure; and
- Incorporate a risk management culture into our processes, policies, and decisions.

While mitigating risk and liability exposure, this guideline will also prioritize public safety on Authority owned/managed lands. This is accomplished by implementing a variety of mitigation measures including the coordination of property inspections by qualified personnel to recognize, mitigate, and where possible, eliminate or reduce hazards. The guideline improves the Authority’s decision-making process, better protects the organization and the public, while maintaining the attributes of the properties.

The purpose of Land Classification is to provide a classification method for SCRCA owned or managed lands as they relate to the Standards of Care defined by the *Occupier Liability Act (OLA)*, and to provide guidance regarding inspections, signage, and maintenance procedures within each classification. Separate Signage Guidelines and Hazard Tree Procedures will be developed utilizing the land classification guideline within this document.

Appendix B, property classifications may change over time, with some properties becoming either less or more suitable for public use depending on the condition of the property, available resources for development and maintenance, and other deciding factors.

Although the initial focus is on Conservation Authority owned or managed lands, we recognize that risks exist in many forms throughout our business. In the coming years,

various departments will assess their programs for risk exposure and develop mitigation strategies to address potential exposure.

Signage Guideline:

The signage guideline is intended to unify all property signage to appropriately serve the needs of the SCRCA and to provide consistent messaging to the public. Public signage on SCRCA properties is an integral part of risk management and mitigation, and provides property users with relevant information related to the use and conditions of the property.

The aim is to have as few signs as possible, each with clear and consistent graphics, typography, and messaging. The placement of signs is intended to be consistent across the properties to maximize effectiveness and efficiency.

The signage guideline will be a living document that is updated as sample signs are designed, and new signage types are required. The guideline cannot address every potential signage requirement, and on occasion, additional sign types will be necessary.

Signage shall be updated, replaced, and/or installed at the discretion of SCRCA as resources allow.

Hazard Tree Management Procedure:

The purpose of the hazard tree procedure is to maintain SCRCA owned and/or managed properties in a manner that ensures public and staff safety. The hazard tree program is a key component of the Authority’s Risk Management Program.

The procedure identifies and assesses hazard trees according to level of risk and sets expectations for inspection frequency, areas to be inspected, and timeline for hazard removal.

BD-22-43

MacKinnon – Miller

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 5, 2022 regarding the SCRCA policy and procedure updates and further approve the SCRCA Risk Management and Land Classification Guideline, Signage Guideline, and Hazard Tree Management Procedure, as provided, and further permits staff to implement minor updates in future years.”

CARRIED

The letter of resignation, dated April 6, 2022 from Director Dan McMillan, representing the Municipality of Middlesex Centre was reviewed.

Director’s Comments:

It is with regret that the letter of resignation from long-standing board member, Dan McMillan is accepted. The Municipality of Middlesex Centre is in the process of appointing a new member to the Board.

BD-22-44

Kennes – Westgate

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the correspondence dated April 6, 2022, from Director Dan McMillan, providing notice of his resignation from the Board of Directors effective immediately.”

CARRIED

The correspondence, dated April 4, 2022 from Mr. Rob Duke regarding the Highland Glen Conservation Area was reviewed, as was the response, dated April 5, 2022 from Chair, Mike Stark.

BD-22-45

Burrell – Wilkins

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the correspondence dated April 4, 2022 from Mr. Rob Duke regarding the status of repairs to the Highland Glen Conservation Area boat launch and the response from SCRCA Chair Mike Stark, dated April 5, 2022.”

CARRIED

A presentation was provided by St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation (SCRCF) member, Ralph Coe on the function, governance of the Foundation, as well as an overview of Foundation-owned lands and how they are acquired.

The SCRCF Annual Report and property summary was reviewed.

Director’s Comments:

Directors thanked Mr. Coe for the comprehensive presentation and for his personal dedication to the Authority and Foundation over the years. Questions arose prompting discussion on the advantages of donating land to the Foundation vs. the Authority, as well as carbon tax credits.

BD-22-46

MacKinnon – Wilkins

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the verbal presentation from St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation Board Member, Ralph Coe on the function and governance of the Foundation, and further acknowledges receipt of the accompanying Foundation Annual Report, mapping and property summary for information.”

CARRIED

Informational Items

Item 9.1 (a) Business Arising

The report on business arising was reviewed.

Item 9.1 (b) Current Watershed Conditions

Report Highlights:

- The flood threat across the watershed is currently low, with approximately 60 cm of freeboard in Wallaceburg
- Water level models are forecasting levels on the surrounding Great Lakes to further drop over the next six months compared to 2021 levels (Figures 2, 3)
- Precipitation averages are well below normal for the past three months, however are near normal values for the past six and twelve months (Table 1)

Watershed Conditions

Flood Threat

Water levels on the surrounding Great Lakes are well below their 2020 all-time record high, averaging a drop of 54 cm between Lakes Huron, St. Clair and Erie. Water levels on the Great Lakes are forecast to continue dropping over the next six months compared to last year, however remain above the 103-year long-term water level averages. Lower water levels on the lakes provide shorelines with greater capacity from the effects of wave action and surge.

As of this report, water levels remain slightly elevated from last month's freshet and subsequent rain events however no major flooding concerns are present within the watershed. Reduced precipitation over the last few months and lower water levels on the Great Lakes are resulting in approximately 60 cm of freeboard in Wallaceburg.

Precipitation

- Precipitation amounts for the last quarter are well below normal with the exception of Sarnia, where higher precipitation amounts have increased the overall average for the region for this time period
- Precipitation amounts across the region for the past six and twelve months are near normal averages owing to higher precipitation events in the summer and fall
- Lake Superior has had predominately net-negative basin supply for the past year, whereas the Lake Michigan-Huron system has seen fluctuations between net-positive and net-negative amounts.
- Net basin supplies upstream of Lake Huron can be an early indicator of how water levels may fluctuate in the coming year.

Lake Levels

- Lakes Huron, St. Clair and Erie are down from this time last year, with drops in levels by 42 cm, 22 cm and 5 cm respectively, and a total drop of 69 cm, 51 cm and 42 cm from the maximum monthly mean set in 2020
- While levels are down from previous years, levels remain above average by 21 cm, 39 cm and 42 cm based on the 1918-2021 period of record
- Water levels are markedly lower from 2020, owing to predominately net-deficit monthly water balances in the Lake Superior region (Figure 1). Reduced amounts of precipitation in the Upper Great Lakes region eventually impact water levels in our region, approximately one year later
- The Lake Huron water level is forecast to continue dropping compared to the previous year's levels (red hash, green line), however remain above the average level (blue line)
- The Lake St. Clair water level is also forecast to be lower compare to the previous year, however likely to remain above the long-term average water level

Item 9.1 (c) Shoreline Projects

Old Lakeshore Road near Penhuron Drive Shoreline Improvements

- Contract was awarded to Van Bree drainage and Bulldozing
- Shoreline work started mid-January
- Construction on-site continues to move along well
- Project is currently on schedule and on budget
- All in water works have been completed as of March 31, 2022
- Expected date of completion – June, 2022

Port Lambton Park Shoreline project

The project site is 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.

- Contract was awarded to Dicocco Contracting Ltd
- Construction work started beginning of February, 2022
- Construction on-site continues to move along well
- Project is currently on schedule and on budget
- All in water work has been completed as of March 31, 2022
- Expected date of completion – May, 2022

Directors Comments:

Director Al Broad brought attention to the item 9.1 (l) – Communications Update, and expressed concern regarding the upcoming Canoe/Kayak Race, which municipal staff and council were not made aware of. It was requested that staff inform the municipality

well in advance of such events

Item 9.1 (d) Biology Department Update

To encourage uptake and implementation of best management practices (BMPs) and stewardship amongst farmers and rural landowners within our watershed, SCRCA provides relevant information regarding the building of soil health, conservation, 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.

These are some ways we collate relevant information to disseminate to people in our watershed:

- March 31, 2022: Posted *Managing Phosphorus in the Sydenham Watershed* presentation online and sent out media release that included actions for community members (www.sydenhamriver.on.ca/phosphorus)
- April 12, 2022: Girl Guides Earth Day Species at Risk Event to present information about the SAR we have in the Sydenham and have the Sparks (15 girls aged 5-6) complete the colouring contest sheet from the 2022 SAR newsletter.
- Thursday April 21: *Bowen's Creek Restoration* talk for the Fish and Wildlife Habitat Committee, St. Clair River Area of Concern
- Thursday April 21 & 22: *Day in the Life of a Biologist* virtual electrofishing demonstration for elementary students.
- Wednesday April 27th @ 11am: Soil Health and Beneficial Insects: Beyond Bees and Butterflies presentation by Stephanie Frischie (Xerces Society), the diversity of soil invertebrates, their role in soil health, and gardening and farming practices that support soil life. (via Zoom)
Registration is to this event open to all, please click on this link:
<https://bit.ly/36DQAGt>

Staff continue to work on projects that aim to improve the health of the watershed by engaging the local community and experts in identifying and addressing environmental issues. These projects include:

- Sydenham Watershed Phosphorus Management Plan being undertaken with financial support from Environment and Climate Change Canada as well as the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks Great Lakes Program
- Sydenham River Aquatic Species at Risk Threat Inventory being undertaken with funding from the DFO Habitat Stewardship Program for Aquatic Species at Risk.

Funding Applications Updates:

The Biology department is self-funded from a number of grants and contracts with Provincial, Federal and municipal governments.

Grant	Project Description	Amount Funded	Status
Fisheries and Oceans Canada - Habitat Stewardship Program for Aquatic Species at Risk	Sydenham River Aquatic Species at Risk Threat Inventory	Requested \$42,500	Submitted December, 2021 for 2022/23 funding
Nature Canada -Winter Youth Grant	Stewardship Communications Technician salary support	Secured 50% support January-March, 2022 wages	Final invoice submitted April 11, 2022
Environment and Climate Change Canada - EcoAction	On the ground phosphorus reduction projects and outreach programs	Requested \$100,000 over 2022-2024	Submitted January, 2022
Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk	Captive Hatch and Release Program for Spiny Softshell turtle	Requested \$95,000 over three years from 2022/23 to 2024/25	Submitted Jan 22, 2022
Habitat Stewardship Program for Terrestrial Species at Risk	St. Clair Region Terrestrial Species at Risk Habitat Threats abatement tool; review and digitization of species records for mapping and prioritizing management actions on authority owned lands	\$53,250	Project completed March 31, 2022; final report to be submitted by end of April.
Species at Risk Stewardship Program (in collaboration with Ontario Nature)	Spiny Softshell turtle outreach and education activities for April 2021 to March 2022	\$15,000	Project complete: SCRCA should receive agreement with Ontario Nature shortly. Final report submitted March 25, 2022
Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks - Canada Ontario Agreement	Healthy Lake Huron Program in Lambton Shores - April 2022-March 2023	\$60,000	Agreement in place. Signed March 14, 2022. Finalized TPA Returned March 21, 2022.

Grant	Project Description	Amount Funded	Status
Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks - Great Lakes Program	Sydenham River Watershed Phosphorus Management Plan, monitoring, stewardship projects, and outreach from January, 2022 – March, 2023	\$115,000	Approved
Fisheries and Ocean Canada - Canada Nature Fund of Aquatic Species at Risk	The construction of Spotted Gar habitat at the Keith McLean property near Rondeau Bay 2022/33 – 2025/26	Requested \$172,000	We are working on a revised agreement.
Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks - Great Lakes Local Action Fund	Spotted Gar habitat at the Keith McLean property near Rondeau Bay for 2022/23	Requested \$47,000	Application submitted.

Strategic Objective(s):

These grants and programs fulfil 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.

Item 9.1 (e) Regulations Summary Report

The regulations summary report to March 31, 2022 was reviewed.

Item 9.1 (f) Planning Activity Summary Report

The planning activity summary report to March 31, 2022 was reviewed.

Item 9.1 (g) Revenue and Expenditures

The report on revenue and expenditures to February 28, 2022 was reviewed.

Item 9.1 (h) Disbursements

The report on monthly disbursements for January to March, 2022 was reviewed.

Item 9.1 (i) General Levy

The general levy status report to March 31, 2022 was reviewed.

Item 9.1 (j) Investment Reports

The investment reports for the period ending February 28, 2022 were reviewed.

Item 9.1 (k) St. Clair River AOC Update

RAP Coordination

BUI 1- Restrictions on fish and wildlife consumption

In the Spring of 2021, a community survey was launched to gather insight on the habits of recreational and sports anglers that fish in the St. Clair River. This survey is collecting information from the community to advance the St. Clair River Remedial Action Plan, as identified in the 2017-2022 Work Plan. To date 130 survey responses have been received. The survey remains available for completion online at friendsofstclair.ca/fish survey or by phone. Opportunities are being identified to collect survey responses in person through the summer months as COVID restrictions allow.

BUI 9- Restrictions on drinking water consumption or taste and odour problems BUI

At the January 20, 2022 meeting of the Canadian RAP Implementation Committee (CRIC), the Draft Assessment Report for the restrictions on drinking water consumption or taste and odour problems BUI was approved to enter the redesignation process. The next step is to gain support from Aamjiwnaang First Nation, Walpole Island First Nation, and the Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC).

Administration

The 2020-2022 Agreement between the SCRCA and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks to support RAP Coordination expires on March 31, 2022. A new 2-year agreement has been signed to support the work from March 1, 2022 – February 28, 2024.

The first set of deliverables identified in the contract between the SCRCA and Environment and Climate Change Canada have been completed. This work included the development of a project work plan and call schedule, a draft status recommendation report for the *loss of fish and wildlife habitat* BUI, an interim report and presentation on the community fish consumption survey, and a report summarizing public and indigenous engagement.

Meetings

Canadian RAP Implementation Committee (CRIC)

- January 20, 2022
- Next Meeting: TBD

Friends of the St. Clair River (FOSCR)

- December 8, 2021 (AGM)
- February 15, 2022
- Next Meeting: TBD

Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC)

- January 27, 2022
- March 24, 2022
- Next Meeting: TBD

Outreach and Engagement

Natasha Pozega, RAP Coordinator, presented *An Update on the St. Clair River Area of Concern* at the State of Lake Erie Conference hosted by the International Association for Great Lakes Research (IAGLR) on March 16 & 17, 2022. The presentation recording is now available at <https://friendsofstclair.ca/st-clair-river-area-of-concern/st-clair-river-aoc/>.

The 2021 Annual Report for the St. Clair River Area of Concern is now complete and in circulation. The report highlights some of the key accomplishments for the year, including:

- Redesignation of BUI 4: Fish Tumours and Other Deformities,
- AOC Science Symposium Virtual Information Series,
- AOC Story Map,
- New monthly E-Newsletters, and the
- AOC Video.

This report set the foundation for a series of municipal update presentations to Sarnia Mayor and Council (January 17, 2022), Village of Point Edward Mayor and Council (January 23, 2022), and St. Clair Township (February 7, 2022).

A digital copy of the report can be found at friendsofstclair.ca.

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 Recent Newsletters:

- [January 2022 E-Newsletter](#)
- [February 2022 E-Newsletter](#)
- [March 2022 E-Newsletter](#)

Each of the past newsletters can be viewed at friendsofstclair.ca/about-us/newsletters/.

St. Clair River Remedial Action Plan Coordinator

Natasha Pozega, Remedial Action Plan (RAP) Coordinator since September 2020 accepted a new position and resigned from the SCRCA effective March 25, 2022. The entire RAP team and Conservation Authority wishes her the very best of luck in her new position.

The RAP Coordinator position was advertised through the SCRCA website, Conservation Ontario, and social media. Applications were due on April 1, 2022. Interviews will be held in the coming weeks with a new RAP Coordinator expected to be in place by the end of April or beginning of May, 2022.

Item 9.1 (I) Communications Update

Sydenham River Canoe and Kayak Race:

After being cancelled in 2018 and 2019 due to water levels, and in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, SCRCA staff are pleased to announce that planning is underway for the 2022 Sydenham River Canoe and Kayak Race.

After reviewing historical water level trends with SCRCA Water Resources staff, the race date has been pushed back to Sunday, May 1st in hopes that the water level issues experienced in 2018 and 2019 will not lead to the cancellation of the 2022 race.

The Sydenham River Canoe and Kayak Race begins at Mossie Road, just west of County Road 79, north of Cairo, and features 11 different classes and three different race lengths. All classes finish at the Shetland Conservation Area on Lambton County Road 2.

The race typically attracts between 70 and 100 paddlers and serves as a fundraiser for the Authority's Conservation Education program. The race is co-sponsored by the St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation.

New in 2022 will be online registration hosted through the Race Roster platform, which is expected to go 'live' the week of April 11th. Promotion of the event will also occur over the coming weeks.

Staff have been contacted by several residents about the canoe race. Many have expressed their support for moving the race date back and are eager to participate on May 1st.

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 January 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021:

Media Relations

Activity	2022 (January – March)	2021 (January – March)
Media Releases	6	4
News Article Mentions	461	105

Social Media

Facebook

Activity	Total	2022 (January – March)	2021 (January – March)
Post Reach*	--	28,918	33,307
Page Visits	--	1,292	965
New Likes/Followers	2,281	44	78
Posts	--	53	68

***Post Reach** – The number of people who saw any content from your Page or about your Page, including posts, stories, ads, social information from people who interact with your Page, etc.

Twitter

Activity	Total	2022 (January – March)	2021 (January – March)
Tweets	--	59	144
Retweets	--	57	87
New Followers	833	24	29
Engagements*	--	892	1976

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

SCRCA Website

Activity	2022 (January – March)	2021 (January – March)
Website Views	38,572	48,463
Website Visitors	12,159	14,594

Strategic Objectives(s):

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

Item 9.1 (m) Conservation Education Update

Winter Education Program Summary

COVID-19 continues to have a significant impact on Conservation Education. St. Clair Conservation's Education Team continues to meet these challenges with innovative, creative, and flexible programming! To date over 12,000 students have benefited this school year from St. Clair's willingness to adapt. We are thrilled to be able to share our successes. For a full list of our current programs check www.scrca.on.ca/govirtual.

Winter Education Programs

St. Clair Conservation continues to offer programming in-person outdoors and virtually in the classroom. Free Sponsored programs continue to be a good option for the winter months. St Clair is fully booked for ALL sponsored programs that are currently offered. For a full list of our current programs check www.scrca.on.ca/govirtual.

Phosphorus 101: Sponsored by Friends of the St. Clair River and EcoAction Canada, this program introduces students from Grades 8-12 to the issue of phosphorus loading into our watershed and Lake Erie. The live-stream version of the program was once again fully booked with over 500 students participating in 2022.

Watershed 101: Friends of the St. Clair River continue to sponsor this live-stream program which focuses on the interconnectivity between land and water. Grade 6-8 students will 'tour' the conservation area, learning about watershed management and how 'what happens upstream impacts downstream'. This program was fully booked for 2022 with approximately 476 students participating.

Spring Water Awareness Schoolyard Program: Plains-Midstream Canada continues to sponsor this program. New for April 2022, staff are offering in-person schoolyard programs to teach students about the hazards of cold, fast-moving water in the spring time. Through games and experiments, students learn how cold water impacts the body, the dangers that can be found in and around flood water, and what to do if someone falls in. Approximately 1000 students are expected to participate.

Bluewater Association for Safety, Environment and Sustainability (BASES) Programming: This program has been put on hold, until a formal contract has been signed between SCRCA and BASES. We hope to resume this program in the fall of 2022.

Maple Syrup Program: This fee-based program was offered in two formats for March 2022. Students were able to participate either through ‘Live-Stream with a Naturalist’ or in-person for a Traditional Field Trip at A.W. Campbell Conservation Area. During the month of March, over 300 participants learned about Maple tree identification, tapping, and syrup production, as well as the history of maple syrup in Canada.

Nature in Winter Program: This fee-based program was offered as a ‘Live-Stream with a Naturalist’ program again for the Winter of 2022. A total of 148 students participated in this programming opportunity.

Webinar Programs

‘Live-Stream from the Sugar Bush’ Webinar: During the month of March over 900 students joined St Clair Education Staff via a live-stream webinar to learn about Maple Syrup. This fee-based webinar was offered to every class in the Lambton Kent District School Board (LKDSB) and the St Clair Catholic District School Board (SCCDSB).

‘A Day in the Life of a Biologist’ Webinar: St Clair Staff will be offering webinars to LKDSB and SCCDSB students each month for the remainder of the school year. In April, Education Staff will be joined by SCRCA Biology Staff to teach students (from Kindergarten to Gr. 12) about the fish in the St Clair Region Watershed.

Kettle and Stony Point First Nation – Canadian Nature Fund, Year 3
St Clair Staff continue working closely with the Principal, Ojibwee Language program, and Hillside teachers to assist with development and delivery of the Land-Based Ed initiative this school year (Sept, 2021 – June, 2022). Staff have been visiting the school weekly to take ‘bushwalks’ with each grade in the school (Kindergarten – Gr. 8). Outdoor Education ‘bushwalks’ involve a walking field trip to a local woodlot to participate in various Conservation Education programs.

Strategic Objectives(s):

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

BD-22-47

Grimes – Burrell

“That the Board of Directors approves the consent agenda and receives the accompanying items 9.1 (a) through 9.1 (m) as information.”

CARRIED

Under New Business

Director Brad Loosley made a request for the 2023 SCRCA Board of Directors to look into and consider the possibility of a reduction in membership, retaining a consultant or third party with experience and knowledge in weighted voting to provide direction. It was suggested that Conservation Ontario, or other Conservation Authorities may be of assistance. Directors Joe Faas, Lorie Scott and Al Broad expressed their disfavour of this pursuit, and concern for municipal partnerships, particularly while the CA is negotiating memorandums of understanding, as well as the toll on staff time. Chair Mike Stark explained that a unanimous vote in favour of reducing the size of the board is required from all member municipalities in order to move forward, which may be a futile effort.

A recorded vote was requested.

In Reference to Motion BD-22-48

Director's Name	For	Against
Brennan, John	Not present	
Brewer, Diane		✓
Broad, Alan		✓
Brown, Pat		✓
Burrell, Terry		✓
Dennis, Bill		✓
Faas, Joe		✓
Grimes, Greg		✓
Hall, Aaron	Not present	
Kennes, Frank		✓
Loosley, Brad	✓	
MacKinnon, Betty Ann		✓
Marriott, Kevin	Not Present	
McMillan, Dan		✓
Miller, Steve		✓
Nemcek, Frank		✓
Scott, Lorie		✓
Stark, Mike		✓
Westgate, Jerry		✓
Wilkins, Tim		✓
TOTALS	1	16

BD-22-48

Loosley – Kennes

“That the SCRCA recommends to the post-municipal election 2023 SCRCA Board of Directors after to retain a consultant to investigate the possibility of reducing the Board membership and for a report of findings to come back to the Board of Directors.”

DEFEATED

New Business Continued

Director Tim Wilkins requested an update on a previous request to have SCRCA Planning and Regulations staff provide an overview of mapping tools. Director of Planning and Regulations, Melissa Deisley responded, noting that SCRCA and municipal planning teams meet routinely and that all parties are aware of how to access mapping. SCRCA remains available to answer questions at any time, should they arise.

Director’s Comments:

Chair, Mike Stark gave a reminder to Committee Members to submit the performance review documentation prior to the May 5, 2022 meeting.

BD-22-49

Miller – Brewer

“That the Board of Directors advise the public that a Performance Review Committee meeting will be held in a closed session on May 5, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. to deal with a personnel matter related to an identifiable individual.”

CARRIED

BD-22-50

Kennes - Faas

“That the meeting be adjourned.”

CARRIED



Mike Stark
Chair



Ken Phillips
General Manager