November 12, 2015

The Board of Directors Meeting of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority was held on the above date, at the Administration Office in Strathroy, at 10:00 a.m.

Present: Steve Arnold, Chair; Norm Giffen, Vice Chair; Diane Brewer, Tony Bruinink, Andy Bruziewicz, Todd Case, Joe Faas, Larry Gordon, Mike Kelch, Betty Ann MacKinnon, Kevin Marriott, John McCharles, Dan McMillan, Steve Miller, Frank Nemcek, Cindy Scholten, Jeff Wesley, Muriel Wright

Absent: Alan Broad, Gerry Rupke

Also Present: Brian McDougall, General Manager; Kevan Baker, Director of Lands; Patty Hayman, Director of Planning; Dallas Cundick, Environmental Planner/Regulations Officer; Tracy Prince, Director of Finance; Rick Battson, Director of Communications; Steve Shaw, Manager of Conservation Services; Marlene Dorrestyn, Administrative Assistant

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting 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.

It was requested that the Shoreline Management Plan be put on the agenda under New Business.

**BD-15-041**

**Bruinink - Scholten**

**“That the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting, held September 17, 2015, be approved as distributed.”**

 **CARRIED**

The General Manager’s report was discussed:

* Parliamentary Assistant Mandate Commitment
	+ engage with ministries, municipalities and stakeholders
	+ address roles, responsibilities and governance of conservation authorities in resource management and environmental protection
* Review Drivers
	+ Drummond report (2012) - review conservation authorities’ roles and responsibilities
	+ Conservation Ontario (2012) and Association of Municipalities of Ontario (2012) requests
	+ ongoing concerns from municipalities and other stakeholders
* Review Objective
	+ identify opportunities to improve the existing legislative, regulatory and policy framework that governs CAs and the programs/services they deliver on behalf of the province, municipalities, and others
* Review Scope
	+ governance, funding, and roles and responsibilities
	+ does not include local conservation authority programs and decisions
	+ Engagement Sessions 21 sessions
	+ 10 cities
	+ 200+ participants
* final facilitator’s report – early November
* roll-up and internal report-back on engagement results – Late November
* seek direction on next steps – December
* Conservation Ontario Conservation Authorities Act Subcommittee meeting later today to review comments received to date – a verbal report will be provided at the Board meeting

Ontario Not For Profit Corporations Act

* originally introduced in 2013 this legislation died on the floor at the call of the 2014 election
* it is intended to provide Ontario not-for-profit corporations, including charitable corporations, with a modern legal framework to meet the needs of today’s not-for-profit sector. It sets out how not-for-profit corporations are created, governed and dissolved
* once it is in effect, ONCA will generally apply automatically to all Ontario not-for-profit corporations.
* Ministry of Government and Consumer Services has confirmed that the act will not be proclaimed until late 2017 or 2018
* upon proclamation not for profits corporations will have three years to meet the requirements of the act

Strategic Plan

* in 1995, the Authority approved a Watershed Strategy which established a Mission and a Vision for the Authority moving forward
* the document outlined goals, priorities and principles to guide Authority Board Members and staff
* many aspects of the document remain appropriate for today and the future
* however, some changes have occurred over the past 20 years
* as a result, staff have commenced a review of the Strategy
* subject to the review, staff will be drafting an updated strategy, as well as a consultation process that will be circulated for review at a future meeting

Succession Plan

* the Authority has entered a period of time which will see as many as 10 staff retire over a 6 year time frame
* staff are drafting an Organizational Competency Talent Pool Succession Plan
* the concise plan will focus on staff assessments to determine those who appear to be ready to advance to management positions and a training regimen that would put them in the best position to be successful in any future positions
* the draft plan will be presented to the Board at a future meeting

Maple Syrup

* for over 40 years, the Authority has hosted a maple syrup program at Campbell Conservation Area
* the program has gone through several major changes over the years
	+ hosting the entire festival – pancake breakfasts and wagon rides
	+ two weeks of elementary school field trips to learn about syrup making
	+ and currently, the education program that is twinned with the firefighters pancake breakfast in Alvinston
	+ the current program provides an opportunity to learn about multiple generations of sap collecting and syrup making as well as a chance to make and taste yummy maple treats
* each version of the program has been well received by participants and it provided us with the chance to have new visitors come and enjoy the conservation area
* however, time is catching up with the Sugar Shack as well as some of the equipment used to carry out the program
* we have a good program that is well received by those who attend
* attendance does vary from year to year with weather being the most impactful factor
* there is a small amount of revenue from the donation box at the entrance but this particular event is not a money maker for the Authority
* we have contacted the Township of Brooke-Alvinston and the Brooke-Alvinston Firefighters to confirm that local value of our program as well as to gauge the long term support for the Pancake Breakfast
* in order to have appropriate equipment to run the program and a sound structure to host the program we are requesting the Foundation’s financial support of $6,000.00 to replace, repair or improve the following:
	+ Sugar Shack Chimney – repair - $5000 -7000
	+ Road and access improvements – gravel - $1000
	+ Sugar Shack Exterior- paint - $500
	+ Boiling Pans – replace - $250
	+ Countertop – replace - $250
	+ Miscellaneous – Flooring / Water Accessibility / Teaching Aides - $1000
* the Foundation has approved $6000 in principle to support the repairs however, staff are concerned about significant expenditures being allocated toward a two day project that traditionally costs the several thousand dollars annually

**BD-15-042**

**McMillan - Scholten**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the General Manager’s report, dated November 2, 2015.”**

 **CARRIED**

Conservation Ontario minutes of the September 28, 2015 meeting were reviewed.

**BD-15-043**

**Kelch - Marriott**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the September 28, 2015 meeting minutes of Conservation Ontario.”**

 **CARRIED**

A report on the business arising from the last meeting was discussed.

* create a link on our website directing people to the Environmental Registry by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests regarding the Conservation Authorities Act – *completed, removed after close of comment period.*

**BD-15-044**

**Bruinink - Miller**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the updates on business arising from the September 17, 2015 Board of Directors meeting.”**

 **CARRIED**

A Conservation Lands Update was reviewed:

* Camping Statistics:
* 425 seasonal campers have registered in our 3 campgrounds, up from 419 in 2014. 193 seasonal campers are registered at Warwick (188 in 2014), 123 at LC Henderson (123 in 2014) and 109 at A.W. Campbell (108 in 2014).
* our 3 regional campgrounds have been busy this year, gross revenues to the end of September are $ 1,068,000 (up 6 %), with net revenues up 7 %.
* Warwick Conservation Area:
* the new entrance roadway was completed prior to the start of the camping season
* a butterfly meadow was establish on the old access roadway, funds to complete this project were donated by a seasonal camper
* new security gates to be installed on the entrance roadway
* 11 existing 15 amp campsites have been upgraded to 30 amp
* the pool washroom and pump house has been resided with steel
* 2 chainsaw carvings have been completed (Camper Association donation)
* 200 meters of new trail have been developed and surfaced with chip and dust
* 20 hardwood trees have been planted
* 20 acres of agricultural land was tendered and a 5 year lease was signed with the previous tenant (matched accepted offer)
* L.C. Henderson Conservation Area:
* 15 new picnic tables have been purchased & distributed
* upgrades have been completed to the WIFI system
* the main pavilion roof has been replaced with steel
* 2 new basketball standards have been installed (Foundation bingo)
* erosion protection works have been completed on the two weirs; this included additional rip rap and surfacing material
* the campers memorial deck and garden has been constructed- plaques will be installed along the upper railing facing in the memory of seasonal campers
* 15 memorial trees have been planted
* 45 acres of agricultural land was tendered and a 5 year lease was signed with a new tenant (previous tenant moved away from the area)
* A.W. Campbell Conservation Area:
* a new 200 amp hydro panel has been installed at the pool washroom building
* 4 new entrance gates have been installed & landscaping improvements have been completed at the main gate
* 2 new portable washrooms have been purchased and assembled (Foundation bingo)
* a number of improvements have been completed to the existing mini golf course, these include new carpet, landscaping and the installation of obstacles on a few of the holes
* Conservation Area signage has been upgraded on Nauvoo Road at Shiloh Line
* 87 acres of agricultural land was tendered and a 5 year lease was signed with the previous tenant (matched accepted offer)
* Other Conservation Areas:
* new property identification signs have been installed at Crothers Conservation Area and the Sinclair Property
* Wawanosh- new security gates to be installed
* C.J. McEwen – a number of dead or dangerous poplar trees have been removed
* Highland Glen – a number of dead and dangerous ash trees have been removed; indicator posts have been installed to better identify the entrance to the boat ramp; a local welding company has been contracted to provide an estimate to install additional boat ramp walkways
* Strathroy Conservation Area – 2 trail benches and 330 metres of trail have been installed; 6 new board walk sections have been added along the trail system; the entrance roadway has been upgraded with 2 new culverts and erosion protection (Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc)
* Clark Wright – new security gates have been installed
* 6 accessible picnic tables have been installed at 6 different conservation areas (Foundation)
* Grass Cutting contracts - 14 Authority (conservation areas) and Foundation owned properties will be tendered out to the private sector for grass cutting services; contracts are for a 3 year period
* McKeough Upstream Lands:
* Property 38 – a large wetland with a series of ponds has been completed, final grading of the ponds occurred this month
* approximately 5.2 acres of grass buffer strips have been planted along drains and natural water courses throughout the McKeough Upstream Lands
* over 1,100 acres of agriculture land (pasture, hay and cash crop) has been tendered; the majority of the previous tenants have matched the accepted offers and have been sent their 5 year lease.
* a looped trail has been developed at the Moore Wildlife Management Area
* Foundation Lands:
* Harrison Woodlot: a new property identification sign has been installed
* Sinclair Property:
* a new property identification sign has been installed
* a new 5 year agricultural lease to be negotiated with Rural Lambton Stewardship Network
* Gawne Property:
* 50 acres of agricultural land was tendered and a 5 year lease will be prepared with a new tenant
* Keith McLean Conservation Lands:
* a 50 x 65 ft gravel parking lot has been constructed
* 2 access gates have been installed at the Rose Beach Line entrance
* a trail loop has been developed
* a new floor has been installed in one of the drainage system pump houses
* Lambton County Lands:
* Lambton County Heritage Forest:
* staff regularly inspect and perform maintenance on the 8 kms of trails
* Forestry staff have inventoried, marked and will oversee logging operations within one of the forestry compartments
* Marthaville:
* Staff regularly inspect and perform maintenance which includes trail and parking lot maintenance
* Phragmities around the ponds was sprayed with herbicide this fall (Conservation Services)
* Bowes Creek:
* Forestry staff continue to manage the existing 50,000 seedlings planted on the property; this involves cutting weeds and grasses between the tree rows and applying herbicide within the rows.
* new entrance gates have been installed on the access laneway
* a rental agreement has been signed for the use of the drive shed
* Perch Creek:
* staff regularly inspect and perform maintenance
* existing trails are being cut by a local grass contractor
* a new trail loop to be developed this fall

**CF-15-045**

**Nemcek - Bruziewicz**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the Conservation Lands Update, dated October 27, 2015 on Conservation Area maintenance and development, McKeough Upstream Lands and management activities on Lambton County Lands.”**

 **CARRIED**

A staff report regarding the Campground Traffic was explained.

* Background:
* the County of Lambton traffic department installed a traffic monitoring recorder at each of our Conservation Area campgrounds for a 2 week period from Wednesday, July 22nd to Wednesday, August 5th , 2015
* the recorders were placed on the main entrance roadways and counted the number of vehicles entering and leaving the Conservation Area
* the purpose was to determine the number of vehicles and peak periods when vehicles are entering and leaving our campgrounds
* Results:
* L.C. Henderson Conservation Area (Enniskillen):
* Henderson has 145 campsites and 123 seasonal campers
* total number of vehicles for the 2 week period was 6670
* an average of 476 vehicles per day
* highest daily total was 606 vehicles (Saturday, August 1st )
* highest hourly total was 63 vehicles (Saturday, August 1st)
* highest hourly averages occurred between 11 am to 12 pm and 2 to 3 pm
* A.W. Campbell Conservation Area (Brooke-Alvinston):
* Campbell has 145 campsites and 109 seasonal campers
* total number of vehicles for the 2 week period was 6021
* an average of 430 vehicles per day
* highest daily total was 665 (Friday, July 31)
* highest hourly total was 83 vehicles (Friday, July 31)
* highest hourly averages occurred between 10 to 11 am and 5 to 6 pm
* Warwick Conservation Area (Warwick):
* Warwick has 235 campsites and 193 seasonal campers
* total number of vehicles for the 2 week period was 6608
* an overage of 472 vehicles per day
* highest daily total was 679 (Saturday, August 1)
* highest hourly total was 93 vehicles (Saturday, July 26)
* highest hourly averages occurred between 11 am and 1 pm

**CF-15-046**

**Case - Kelch**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the Campground Traffic Report dated October 26, 2015, summarizing vehicle numbers entering and leaving the three regional campgrounds from July 22nd to August 5th, 2015.”**

 **CARRIED**

A staff report on water levels, current and flood conditions was presented.

* Precipitation and Streamflow Conditions
* watershed hydrometric station level and flow comparisons have remained below the daily average throughout September due to reduced precipitation. Only one rain event was noted in the second week of the month and all levels remained seasonally low into the month following the summer period.
* levels responded to several rain events in October gradually rising to a peak near the end of the month as a result of the remnants of a tropical depression bringing significant rainfall to the region in the last week of the month.
* river levels and discharge increased to values closer to seasonal normal by the end of October resulting from this storm of depositing 35mm – 45mm of rain much of which was absorbed by dry ground conditions due to a relatively dry September. In addition, the overall impact on watercourses was reduced due to the extended duration of the event over a 12 to 18 hour period
* as of this report, seasonal flow conditions have returned to anticipated average levels across much of the watershed
* Precipitation
* notably September was a dry month with only 37% of normal in Strathroy and only slightly higher values for Sarnia (52%). October numbers remained low until the end of the month and finished above the monthly average at most locations. Regionally the three month figures remained low at 87.2% while the six month period showed improvement mostly due to a very wet period in June of this year. Averages however for the last twelve month period are low at 81% making this an unusually dry year.
* Flood Threat
* there have been no flood bulletins reported in the St. Clair region during the fall period with levels remaining in the normal range. The extensive rain event at the end of October was closely monitored and did not result in any major flood concerns. Watercourses are expected to continue to accommodate additional rain events as we move into the winter season. As always, conditions will be monitored and significant changes in rainfall patterns and advisories will be provided as conditions dictate.
* Weather Forecast
* November – average temperatures (1°C) with above average precipitation
* Winter - above normal temperatures with below normal precipitation are expected with increased snowfall in late November
* Great Lake Levels
* the monthly comparison for August 2015 (current available data) indicate that levels continue to improve significantly compared to the 2014 levels for Lake Huron with the August reported level of 176.72m, an increase of 24cmwhen compared with the same month last year and 52cm higher than the average for the last 10 years.The Lake Huron value is also 17cm higher than the average for the entire Period of Record. This trend continues to impact on shorelines by reducing the extent of many beaches and resulting in additional erosion to adjacent dune areas. Visual observations for October continue to indicate high water conditions. Updates to hydrometric data will be included in future reports.

**CF-15-047**

**Marriott - McMillan**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated October 27, 2015 on the current watershed conditions and Great Lakes water levels.”**

 **CARRIED**

A staff report on Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure Projects submitted for funding in 2015-2016.

* review of WECI applications have been completed by a committee of provincial and Conservation Authority staff representatives. The following 4 projects were approved for 2015- 2016.

| Structure | ProjectName | Description of Work | TotalProjectCost ($) | GrantRequested ($) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| McKeough Floodway | McKeough Floodway Berm Repair | perform repair work along the floodway | $200,000 | $100,000 |
| McKeough Floodway | McKeough slope Stability investigation | study- instability is being observed along the McKeough Floodway. Failure scarps and tension cracks are noticed along the face of the slope | $15,000 | $7,500 |
| Arda Dykes | Hazard Tree Removal | remove trees, shrubs and debris that have the potential to cause slope stability issues | $24,000 | $12,000 |
| Wallaceburg Retaining wall | Wallaceburg Retaining wall inspection | inspection of retaining wall in Wallaceburg | $25,000 | $12,500 |

* we continue to wrap up projects on a monthly basis. Status of otherWECI projects is outlined below:

| Structure | ProjectName | Status |
| --- | --- | --- |
| McKeough Dam | McKeough slope Stability investigation | LVM Engineering has been consulted for this work. Work is ongoing, 4 boreholes have been drilled along the floodway. |
| McKeough Dam | McKeough Floodway Berm repair | completed |
| McKeough Dam  | McKeough Dam Drop structure repair | ongoing, Reviewing quote from Contractor |
| LAWSS | LAWSS shoreline repair | completed |

* McKeough Dam – Grape Run drain culvert Replacement
* culverts along the floodway are showing signs of deterioration
* sink holes formed due to failing couplers that connect 2 pipe/culvert sections
* a request for quotation was developed, in July 2015 to obtain potential costs to excavate and replace twin culverts of the culvert measuring 34 meters.
* Conservation Authority staff priced the cost of culvert replacement as well as requested quotes from local excavation contractors to complete the work
* McKeough Floodway staff recommended the project be awarded to B F Environmental at a cost of $ 9715 + HST

repair work was completed end of September 2015

**BD-15-048**

**Gordon - Miller**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated October 30, 2015 on the ongoing Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure projects across the watershed.”**

 **CARRIED**

A staff report regarding the Healthy Watersheds Program in Lambton Shores was reviewed.

* the last few months have been full of events! It’s been wonderful to see so many local landowners interested in learning about best management practices and volunteering.
* September 19th – Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanupat Centre Ipperwash beach. 14 volunteers came out and we collected 50 pounds of garbage! The cleanup efforts made it into 2 local papers.
* September 23rd – Lambton Shores Stewardship Bus Tour. We had 8 landowners come on the tour and hear about how to maintain soil health, no till practices, aggregate stability, and how to use cover crops. Speakers were champion landowners as well as representatives from Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs.
* Farmers learned about a local project called “Soil Your Undies” in which, farmers were asked to bury clean (unused!) cotton underwear for two months and then dig them up two months later. Depending on the cropping practice, there were varying amounts of shredded cotton left! Outcome: better cropping practices and proper rotations with a cover crop yield the greatest soil biota.
* September 25-27th – Forest Fall Fair. Staff met lots of children and families and have 6 landowners to follow up with regarding tree planting projects.
* September 26 – Strathroy TD Tree Day. Volunteers, including the mayor came out to plant 150 trees. We had nearly 35 volunteers on a beautiful sunny day planting native trees in Centennial Park.
* October 24 – Sarnia TD Tree Day. We had around 50 volunteers despite pouring rain! The mayor came to offer his thanks to the volunteers and then they were off planting 300 native trees in two hours. It was muddy, wet work, but our volunteers were smiling and just kept planting!
* October 29th - Lambton Shores Tourfor the Healthy Lake Huron South East Shores working group. Representatives from Environment Canada, Ontario Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs, Saugeen Valley CA, Maitland Valley CA, Ausable Bayfield CA, and Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation stopped at the retired Forest Sewage Lagoons to see the restoration work, Kettle and Stony Point to see the *Phragmites* control work and the kettle concretions, and a final stop at one of our champion landowner’s farms to learn about the innovative work rural landowners are implementing to prevent erosion and improve soil health.
* Stewardship projects – *\*Grants available\** SCRCA secures funding to support landowner implemented stewardship projects including riparian buffers, block tree planting, windbreaks, wetlands, and erosion control measures. Staff meet with landowners and offer advice and project design and where applicable, support projects with grants. Call today for more information.

**BD-15-049**

**Wesley - Kelch**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the status report dated November 2, 2015, regarding Healthy Watersheds program, including the outreach and education events held throughout the watershed.”**

 **CARRIED**

A staff report regarding Fish Community Surveys conducted in 2015 was presented.

* with support from programs such as the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), the SCRCA staff have been able to complete fish community surveys throughout watersheds. Survey work for OTF took place in the Lake Huron tributaries while DFO work took place throughout SCRCA.
* the purpose of fish community surveys is to gain important information on fish species distribution and watershed health. Fish data collected will help determine the watershed health of SCRCA’s watersheds for the Report Cards that are prepared every five years. Additionally, the data will provide information for land management recommendations.
* furthermore, fish records were updated and compiled with data from sources such as the Royal Ontario Museum and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. This includes thousands of fish records from the early 1900s to more recent years.
* using this database, here are some interesting stats from 2015 sampling:
* approximately 4000 fish were examined (weighed, identified, and in some cases measured for length).
* 15 sites were sampled in 10 sub watersheds including St. Clair River Tributaries, Lake St. Clair Tributaries, Sydenham Headwaters, Middle East Sydenham, Lower East Sydenham, Bear Creek Headwaters, Lower Bear Creek, Black Creek, Cow & Perch Creek, and Plympton Shoreline Tributaries.
* close to 40 different fish species were identified in these locations combined.
* there are approximately 160 freshwater fish species in Ontario with the Sydenham being home to at least 82 of these species.
* three watercourses sampled had Blackstripe Topminnow, a fish rare for Canada found only in the Sydenham catchment, was located in Booth Creek, Bourne Drain, and Longs Creek Drain.
* for the Trillium Foundation grant, nine Lake Huron Tributary sites were surveyed in 2015. Watercourses included Waddell Creek, Hickory Creek Drain, Kernohan O’Donnell Drain, McIntyre Drain, McKinley Drain, Perch Creek, Cow Creek, and two sites on Pulse Creek Drain. The purpose of the Healthy Lake Huron Aquatic Inventory is to improve knowledge of aquatic resources in the study area which includes Cow and Perch Creeks, Plympton Shoreline Tributaries and Lambton Shores Tributaries within the St. Clair Region. A better understanding of aquatic resources will provide resource managers, watershed residents, and the general public with the information needed to protect, restore and improve these natural resources within our watersheds. Below are specimens found at 2 of the Lake Huron tributary sites.

**BD-15-050**

**Wright - Faas**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the status report dated October 29, 2015, regarding Fish Community Surveys conducted in 2015 through partnerships with Ontario Trillium Foundation and DFO.”**

 **CARRIED**

A staff a report on recent outreach activities for the Aquatic Inventory and Education Outreach Program was reviewed.

* Hillside Public School
* Grades 3/4 and 4/5 students from the Hillside School at Kettle and Stony Point were educated on aquatic bugs, fish, and their environmental significance on October 14, 2015. The day consisted of an in-class portion where SCRCA staff delivered material on life cycles and biology of these species and why Kettle and Stony Point is so unique with regards to species at risk. Afterward the classes were led down, one at a time, to Shashawandah Creek where they were able to capture aquatic bugs and check minnow traps.
* a second education day took place on October 28, 2015, at Hillside School. This day was an indoor day as weather conditions were not suitable to being outside. Students from both classes participated in a survival game in which some students played species at risk animals seeking food, water and habitat while trying to avoid the “nasties” or threats that would work against the animal’s survival. The students really enjoyed the game and were able to learn how species at risk animals face obstacles when they are trying to survive, from losing habitat and fighting threats like poaching, pesticides and invasive species. Following our game the students created clay turtles and heard a story of a Blanding’s turtle with an important message regarding protecting habitat and keeping mother earth clean and healthy. Overall the students were quite enthusiastic and asked if we would come back soon!
* North Lambton Secondary School
* on October 21, 2015 SCRCA staff conducted an aquatic inventory program for Grade 12 Biology students at North Lambton Secondary School. The students were first educated on species at risk reptiles in the area and how good water quality and ecosystem health is important to support species at risk. Following the quick introduction students were led down to Hickory Creek where it runs along the high school track. While there students learned the steps and methods for conducting aquatic inventories.
* a water quality probe was used to show how we can attain a snapshot of watercourse health. Students learned of the importance of conductivity, pH, temperature, and dissolved oxygen. From the bank students then assessed the stream characteristics. They noted factors influencing stream health such as siltation, erosion, barriers to fish movement, and riparian area to name a few.
* finally the students were able to enter the creek and perform their own assessment, while working in groups, using the benthic macroinvertebrates and their tolerance values. It was determined that the creek was not as healthy as it could be and therefore more is needed to be done to improve and clean the Hickory Creek. Both the students and the teacher thoroughly enjoyed the program and once again we were asked to come back for future programs.

**BD-15-051**

**MacKinnon - Nemcek**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated October 29, 2015 on the recent outreach activities for the Aquatic Inventory and Education Outreach Program in our Lake Huron watersheds.”**

 **CARRIED**

A staff report regarding the Conservation Services programs was explained.

* Tree Planting Program
* staff are busy preparing for the 2016 spring tree planting program
* interested landowners are being called and site visit appointments are well underway
* all projects that meet the program criteria are planned for project review on November 24th for funding approval under one or more of the grant programs that SCRCA has available for financial incentive.
* 2016 tree allocations and prices from the supplying nurseries is expected to be finalize before the end of the month.
* more than $130,000 in grants have been secured through several individual tree planting and habitat improvement programs and will be used to offset landowner project expenses.
* approximately 55,000 trees are expected to be subsidized though the SCRCA next spring.
* Forests Ontario provided SCRCA with $51,000 in grant this year which was used to offset some of the costs of tree planting expenses on private lands.
* Seed Collection Program
* this year’s tree seed collection was very successful with approximately 10 bushels of oak and hickory seed collected and another 10 bushels of walnut seed collected and shipped to our supplying tree nursery.
* deciduous trees are a major component of the SCRCA planting program and future seedling stock from the tree nursery is directly related to the tree seed collected and ship annually.
* all tree seed collected by SCRCA staff is completed in the Southwest tree seed zone and is grown by Somerville Nursery near Alliston, ON. Since demand for deciduous trees is higher than what is available from tree nurseries, first choice for next year’s deciduous trees is normally given to the agency that collected that particular tree seed. This also ensures that trees planted by SCRCA in the future will be from genetically local tree stock.
* Vegetation Management Program
* Fall herbicide application for vegetation control on 2012 to 2015 tree planting sites started the first week of November and will end after the first heavy frost.
* approximately 200,000 trees require follow up fall herbicide this fall
* Warmer fall weather over the past several years has delayed the program due to deciduous trees holding on to their leaves longer than normal
* approximately 15 km of municipal brush spraying was completed this summer for the municipality of Southwest Middlesex. Regrowth of woody brush from the previous year’s drain clean out is treated with a herbicide to prevent re-establishment
* Stewardship funding
* this is the final year of a 3 year stewardship grant under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry’s Species at Risk program
* a new application was completed for another 3 years and sent to MNRF on the October 21st due date
* Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund report has been completed to sent to the OMAFRA on Oct 30th. This was grant money for the phragmites control work in Lambton Shores. A new application for 2016 funding was submitted on Oct 23rd.
* Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has verbally committed to another $10,000 in C.O.A grant dollars for 2016 funding for the same phragmites projects.

**BD-15-052**

**Miller - Bruziewicz**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated November 2, 2015 on the Conservation Services programs and projects across the watershed.”**

 **CARRIED**

Regulations Summary Reports for August to September 2015 were reviewed.

**BD-15-053**

**Scholten - Kelch**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges and concurs with the Regulations Activity Summary Reports on "Development, Interference with Wetlands & Alterations to Shorelines & Watercourses” Regulations (Ontario Regulation 171/06), for August and September, 2015.”**

 **CARRIED**

A staff report regarding the municipal consultation on the Conservation Authority Regulation Wetland Policy was considered.

**BD-15-054**

**Marriott - McMillan**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the verbal report regarding the municipal consultation on the Conservation Authority Regulation Wetland Policy and further that a written report be presented to the December meeting of the Board of Directors.”**

 **CARRIED**

A staff report regarding the August to October, 2015 municipal drain activity report associated with the Drainage Act and Conservation Authorities Act Protocol (DART) was reviewed.

**BD-15-055**

**Nemcek - Faas**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges and concurs with the municipal drain August to October 2015 activity report associated with the Drainage Act and Conservation Authorities Act Protocol (DART).”**

 **CARRIED**

Planning Activity Summary Report for August and September 2015 was reviewed.

**BD-15-056**

**Wright - Miller**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority’s monthly Planning Activity Summary Reports for August and September, 2015.”**

 **CARRIED**

A staff report regarding the St. Clair River Area of Concern was discussed.

**BD-15-057**

**Kelch - Case**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the update dated October 28, 2015 on the St. Clair River Area of Concern.”**

 **CARRIED**

Authority revenue and expenditures to September 30, 2015, were reviewed.

**BD-15-058**

**Faas - MacKinnon**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the revenue and expenditure report to September 30, 2015, as it relates to the budget.”**

 **CARRIED**

September to October 2015 disbursements totaling $601,485.69 were considered.

Jeff Wesley declared a pecuniary interest and did not participate in discussions and did not vote.

**BD-15-059**

**Brewer - Bruinink**

**“That the Board of Directors approves the September and October 2015 disbursements as presented in the amount of $601,485.69.”**

 **CARRIED**

A staff report regarding draft 2016 fees was explained.

**BD-15-060**

**Wright – Scholten**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges and approves the Schedule of Fees dated October 2015, for all programs and services for the year 2016.”**

 **CARRIED**

The apportioning of matching and non-matching general levy to member municipalities for 2016 was considered.

**BD-15-061**

**Kelch - MacKinnon**

**“That the Board of Directors approves the apportioning of matching and non-matching general levy to member municipalities for 2016 as per Schedule A, using the Modified Current Value Assessment, values provided by the Ministry of Natural Resources in October 2015.”**

 **CARRIED**

**BD-15-062**

**Kelch – Gordon**

**“That the Board of Directors receive and accept correspondence from Chatham-Kent, Dawn Euphemia and information from Plympton Wyoming, to be confirmed in writing, regarding the proposed 2016 budget.”**

 **CARRIED**

The 2016 preliminary forecast budget was reviewed.

**BD-15-063**

**Scholten - Bruinink**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated November 4, 2015 on the 2016 proposed forecast budget of $5,228,402 with a municipal general levy of $735,920 including finalized Modified Current Value Assessment values, updates to specific projects and municipal comments received to date.”**

 **CARRIED**

**BD-15-064**

**Kelch - Case**

**“That the Board of Directors direct staff to bring forward the revised 2016 budget for approval at the December meeting.”**

 **CARRIED**

Minutes of the June 15, 2015 meeting of the Health and Safety Committee were reviewed.

**BD-15-065**

**Kelch - Scholten**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the June 15, 2015 meeting minutes of Health and Safety Committee.”**

 **CARRIED**

Appointments to the 2016 Nominating Committee were discussed.

**BD-15-066**

**Faas - Marriott**

**“That the 2016 Nominating Committee consisting of the following four directors representing the four districts of the Authority being Sarnia, Lambton, Chatham-Kent, and Middlesex be Cindy Scholten, Muriel Wright, Jeff Wesley and Norm Giffen and further that the Nominating Committee’s recommendation for the 2016 membership be presented at the Annual General Meeting.”**

 **CARRIED**

The 2016 Tentative Schedule of Meetings was considered.

**BD-15-067**

**McMillan - Wesley**

**“That the Board of Directors approves the 2016 tentative schedule of meetings for the Board of Directors and Committees, dated October 22, 2015.”**

 **CARRIED**

A status report on general levy received to date was discussed.

**BD-15-068**

**Miller - Faas**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the status report on the 2015 general levy receipts to October 27, 2015.”**

 **CARRIED**

A staff report regarding communications was presented.

* Conservation Awards
* a list of possible conservation award recipients will be brought forward at our board meeting in December. Board members wishing to nominate any individual or organization, should contact Rick Battson at the office.
* Memorial Forest Dedications
* from September 2014 – August 2015, 561 trees were dedicated. 510 of these trees were through funeral home partnerships and 51 were through individual donations to the program.
* two dedications were held in the month of September. The McKenzie and Blundy dedication was held on September 20 at the Wawanosh Wetlands Conservation Area. Steve Arnold brought greetings from the Foundation and Authority. Approximately 600 people attended. The Foundation’s dedication was held on September 27 at the Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area. Duncan Skinner (president of the Foundation and Steve Arnold provided the remarks. Approximately 130 people attended.
* to date, 13,405 trees have been dedicated at 45 sites throughout our region.

McKenzie and Blundy Funeral Home – 6,795 trees dedicated (242 in 2015)

Denning Brothers Funeral Home – 2,657 trees dedicated (172 in 2015)

Nicholls Funeral Home – 1,947 trees dedicated (96 in 2015)

Dodge/Denning Funeral Home, Forest – 531 trees dedicated

Individual Donations – 1,856 trees dedicated (51 in 2015)

* Conservation Foundation
* the St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation raises funds to support the work of the Conservation Authority. At a recent meeting, the Foundation approved support for a number of projects.
* $6,000 for trails at Conservation Areas
* $8,000 to finance an intern position
* $5,000 to support the 3D mapping project
* $5,000 to support water quality monitoring
* $8,000 for fishing platforms and dock
* Conservation Education Fundraising
* one of the main Authority programs supported by the Foundation is Conservation Education. This support includes efforts to secure funds from corporate donors, special events and from support through the bingo program. In addition, the Conservation Authority applies for government grants to support the education program. Support in 2015 included:
* Sarnia-Lambton Environmental Association: SLEA will continue its funding of the *River Bottom Critter* and the *Go With The Flow Groundwater* programs in the amount of $30,000. The *River Bottom Critter* program is targeted at grades K – 10 and the *Go With The Flow Groundwater* program at grades 4 – 8.
* Enbridge: Enbridge is ending its support of conservation education. They have completed their 3 year commitment of $10,000 per year for the Alternative Energy Education Program. The program focuses on the science of solar and wind power and discusses the pros and cons of these forms of alternative energy sources. The program is targeted at grade 2 and 4 – 12 and will be offered free of charge until the end of 2015. After that date if another sponsor is not found, the program will be offered for a fee. We are looking at an application to Dupont to fund this program.
* Union Gas: Union Gas continued its support the *Spring Water Awareness* Program in 2015 in the amount of $5,000. Union gas has supported this program for 5 years. This program targeted at grades K – 6.
* Friends of the St. Clair River: The FOSCR is providing $2,000 to support an in-class program called the *River RAP*. This program is introduced using the RAP video supported by the Foundation in previous years. This program is targeted at grades 8 – 10. We have requested for an additional $2,000 to help with the shortfall in fees caused by the elementary teachers work action.
* Lake St. Clair Conference
* the SCRCA participated in the organization of the Lake St. Clair Conference in Chatham on October 21. The Lake St. Clair conference, held every two years, provides a binational forum to exchange information on Lake St. Clair’s changing environment and the actions and tools needed to manage these changes. The conference offers a valuable opportunity to learn more about Lake St. Clair and helps facilitate collaborative efforts for the implementation of actions. The conference was organized through a partnership with Environment Canada, Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, United States Environmental Protection Agency, and the Lake St. Clair Canadian Watershed Coordination Council. Approximately 80 people attended.

**BD-15-069**

**Brewer - MacKinnon**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the Communications Report dated October 29, 2015 including conservation awards, memorial forests, Conservation Foundation update and conservation education fundraising.**

 **CARRIED**

A staff report regarding Conservation Education was presented.

* Fall Education Programs
* despite the current work to rule by the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario, staff have been very busy facilitating in school programs. High school and private school field trip bookings to L. C. Henderson C.A. were scattered throughout the fall season. In-school programming included Alternative Energy Solutions, Groundwater, Aquatic Species At Risk, and River Rap.
* Events
* Henderson Geocaching Event, September 20**:** A beautiful day was forecast for the 7th annual event which attracted over 50 enthusiastic geocachers. Many participants were impressed by the trails and campground facilities. Participants came from as far away as Huntsville, Tobermory, Windsor, London and Port Huron.
* Children’s Water Festival**:** Due to the elementary teacher work to rule, the festival was cancelled this year. It is expected to return in the fall of 2016.
* Mini Rekindle the Spark Workshop**:** Staff visited Fanshawe Conservation Area to learn about a new Ministry of Education Initiative. The Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) allows high school students to earn additional qualifications on their graduation diploma. Conservation Authorities already offer many programs that fulfill requirements for varying SHSM topics. We discussed ways that we could incorporate our programs to fit their needs.
* Lambton Upland Game Bird Youth Day, August 29**:** Staff assisted the Lambton Upland Game Bird Chapter with their annual ‘Kid’s Day’ at the Lambton Conservation Club. SCRCA provided children with a nature-based conservation activity; hunting for insects with sweep nets!! Connections were made between the insects and the ecology of farming, fishing and general ecosystem support. As luck would have it we also found a snake in our hunt allowing the important role of reptiles in our watershed to be discussed. Approximately 60 kids participated in the day.
* Fall Fairs: Wyoming Fair, September 15 and Brigden Fair, October 9**:** Staff participated in ‘Agriculture in the Classroom’ by running an education station. Students learned about beneficial insects and their potential as a tool for farming. The importance of pollinators as natural predators was discussed. Kids were given a chance to hold a praying mantis, one of our largest and more personable insects!! The number of students participating was low due to the ‘work to rule’ situation with the public school teachers. Wyoming fair was cancelled and Brigden Fair hosted only 7 schools.
* Species at Risk Program, Kettle and Stony Point First Nation, October 14 and 28**:** Funding to support these presentations was obtained through AFSAR. Education staff worked in cooperation with SCRCA staff biologists. Two outdoor and two indoor sessions were taught for Gr 3, 4 and 5 students. The educational focus of the outdoor sessions emphasized the role of aquatic invertebrates as a food source and as indicators of water quality. The children visited Shashawanda Creek in their rubber boots to ‘fish’ for bugs in the stream! The indoor sessions included a role playing ‘habitat’ game, a clay play craft and a story about a little Blanding’s Turtle whose home was at risk of destruction.
* Reptiles at Risk, Hickory Creek: North Lambton Secondary School, October 22**:** Education staff and SCRCA biologists facilitated a program for Grade 12 Biology students. The program, in its fourth year, is designed to be a hands-on project in which students assess and improve reptile habitat. The students were involved in a stream assessment to determine the overall health of Hickory Creek and to better understand the presence or absence of reptiles on the property.
* Community Partnerships
* Lambton Wildlife Inc. - Young Naturalist and Junior Conservationists**:** SCRCA continues to sponsor this program and assist in running the two groups; Young Naturalists (age 6-11) and Junior Conservationists (age 12+). Both groups meet once per month at local wild spaces to learn about conservation, habitats and species at risk in the watershed. Overall, approximately 35 youth and their families benefit from these monthly meetings. During September’s indoor meeting, LWI members were shown highlights of activities through a power point presentation and learned about the partnership between LWI and SCRCA.
* Return the Landscape**:** one staff person continues to sit on the Return the Landscape Committee. This Group aims to rescue native flora from development sites and replant them within native landscapes in Lambton County.
* Conferences**:**
* Project Wild Workshop**:** June 29-30th, 2015 – Attended workshop to gain certification as a Project Wild Facilitator. SCRCA staff are now qualified to offer ‘Project Wild’ training to local groups as well as Specialist High Skills Major students in our watershed.
* SHSM Workshop for Outdoor Educators: July 17-18th, 2015 – attended conference held by Toronto Region Conservation Authority in co-operation with Ministry of Education and Ministry of Environment. The conference focused on how Conservation Authorities can help to meet the needs of high school students enrolled in ‘Specialist High Skills Majors’ in our watersheds

**BD-15-070**

**Nemcek - Wright**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the Conservation Education Report, dated October 29, 2015 including education programs, conservation awards, events, community partnerships, and conferences.”**

 **CARRIED**

A staff report regarding an update on the Drinking Water Source Protection Report was reviewed.

* the Ontario Minister of Environment and Climate Change has approved our plan to protect sources of drinking water in the Thames and Sydenham region.
* the Thames-Sydenham and Region Source Protection Plan was developed by local municipal, First Nation and community partners and will take effect December 31, 2015.
* the plan development began in 2007 with the recruitment of 25 very dedicated committee members from across the region who represented our local population and economy. Understanding our sources of municipal drinking water and how vulnerable those sources are to human activity is very important. For many significant threats, the committee chose to use a new tool, the Risk Management Plan, which allows a risk management official and the landowner to negotiate a risk reduction strategy.
* provincial ministries, municipalities, and Conservation Authorities each have a role in implementing the Source Protection Plan. The Province will use existing approval mechanisms to ensure that risk is managed. Municipalities will use new tools to reduce risks to municipal drinking water sources. Risk Management Plans to be developed cooperatively between municipalities and landowners will require the use of established best management practices to reduce risks to drinking water sources. In areas upstream of municipal drinking water intakes, Risk Management Plans may cover activities such as the large-scale handling and storage of fuel or fertilizer. Conservation Authorities will be supporting municipalities by providing expertise and outreach resources.
* the local Source Protection Plan will be reviewed in three years and updated if appropriate.

**BD-15-071**

**Faas - Gordon**

**“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report, dated October 30, 2015, on Drinking Water Source Protection.”**

 **CARRIED**

The meeting went “In Camera” to discuss personnel issues.

**BD-15-072**

**Kelch - Case**

**“That the Board of Directors go in camera at 11:42 a.m. to discuss personnel issues with the General Manager and Director of Finance remaining.”**

 **CARRIED**

**BD-15-073**

**Giffen – Bruinink**

**“That the Board of Directors rise and report at 12:30 p.m.”**

 **CARRIED**

**BD-15-074**

**Kelch - Case**

**“That the Board of Directors approves the use of the 2015 Salary Grid combined with the 2015 surveyed municipal cost of living adjustment to be used as the 2016 Salary Grid and further that the Market Compensation Package information be revised and updated and brought back for review at the April Board meeting.”**

 **CARRIED**

Under New Business, Sarnia City Councillor Scholten requested that the Board review the Shoreline Management Plan and approve it as soon as possible.

**BD-15-075**

**Scholten – Bruziewicz**

**“That the Draft Shoreline Management Plan be brought to the December meeting for review and discussion.”**

 **CARRIED**

Diane Brewer, director representing Southwest Middlesex/Newbury advised that Newbury council are in favour of demolishing the Railroad building at the A.W. Campbell Conservation Area. Correspondence advising of their decision is in the mail.

**BD-15-076**

**Bruinink - Miller**

**“That the meeting be adjourned.”**



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Steve Arnold Brian McDougall

Chair General Manager