



## St. Clair Region Conservation Authority Meeting Highlights – October 26, 2023

Below is a list of highlights from the SCRCA board meeting held in October. For details, please refer to the entire meeting package which can be found at [www.scrca.on.ca/about-us/board-meeting-packages](http://www.scrca.on.ca/about-us/board-meeting-packages).

**Memorandum of Understandings for Category 2 and 3 Programs:** SCRCA General Manager, Ken Phillips continues to engage with staff and councils of member municipalities to begin the process of preparing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and funding agreements for Category 2 and Category 3 programs and services as prescribed under O. Reg. 687/21 – Transition Plans and Agreements for Programs and Services under Section 21.1.2 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*. An extension request beyond the January 1, 2024 deadline has been submitted to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry to allow for continued negotiations with municipalities and finalization of associated MOUs.

**2024 Draft Budget:** The SCRCA management team has completed a draft of the 2024 budget. The budget, forecasted to be \$11,231,089, includes a proposed municipal general levy of \$1,611,345, constituting a 4% increase from the 2023 general levy. The Board of Directors approved the distribution of the budget booklet to member municipalities for input and review. The booklet is also posted on the SCRCA website at <https://www.scrca.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/2024-Draft-Budget-Booklet.pdf>, in accordance with the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

**A.W. Campbell House:** On September 7<sup>th</sup>, the SCRCA issued a letter to the municipal council at Brooke-Alvinston requesting a demolition permit for the A.W. Campbell House under Section 34 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Correspondence received from the municipality indicated that the request had been denied by Council on September 28<sup>th</sup>. The SCRCA Board of Directors directed staff to apply to the appropriate authority for an appeal on the Municipality of Brooke-Alvinston's decision to deny the issuance of a demolition permit for the A.W. Campbell House. Additionally, staff were directed to purchase portable fencing to replace the snow-fencing that is currently surrounding the building.

**Watershed Conditions:** August precipitation amounts were greater than the monthly average with a rain event on August 23<sup>rd</sup> that resulted in significant flooding, particularly in the municipalities of Warwick and Alvinston. The current flood threat in the St. Clair Region watershed is low due to below average precipitation amounts in September and the continued lowering of water levels. Forecasts project that precipitation this fall will be lower than normal.

**Healthy Watersheds Program:** Staff continue to encourage the uptake and implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and promote conservation within the SCRCA watershed. To date, staff have met with or discussed potential projects with

nearly 30 landowners. Project inquiries range from wetlands, tree planting, cover crops, and erosion control measures. In collaboration with various contractors and partners such as Ducks Unlimited Canada and Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) Canada-Middlesex, over 17 erosion control structures, three wetlands, and three cover crop projects have been completed. Another five erosion control structures and one wetland are currently in the process of implementation.

**Planning and Regulations Activity:** Between August 1<sup>st</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, staff issued 31 permits and responded to 91 inquiries under O. Reg 171/06 – Development, Interference of Wetlands, and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses. Additionally, 27 permits were issued during the same timeframe under the *Drainage Act* and Section 28 Regulations Team (DART) protocol. Planning activity between August 1<sup>st</sup> and September 30<sup>st</sup> included the review and comment on 53 municipal plan input and review files, 2 environmental assessments, and 7 legal inquiries.

**St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation Memorial Forest Dedication:** The St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation Memorial Forest Dedication was held on Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup> at the Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area in Petrolia. Duncan Skinner and Pat Brown provided remarks on behalf of the Foundation and Authority, respectively. Over 100 people attended the dedication where a Red Maple was planted as a symbol for all trees dedicated over the last year through donations from individuals not associated with a funeral home program. From September 2022 to August 2023, 74 trees were dedicated through individual donations to the program. To date, a total of 2,502 trees have been dedicated through the Foundation's Memorial Forest Program.

**Inaugural St. Clair River Area of Concern (AOC) Event** – The Canadian Remedial Action Plan (RAP) Implementation Committee organized and held the inaugural annual St. Clair River Area of Concern event on September 28, 2023, at Bogey's Inn and Venue in St. Clair Township. The purpose of the event was to provide the community with an update on the status of addressing the remaining Beneficial Use Impairments in the St. Clair River Area of Concern. The event included a presentation from Fisheries and Oceans Canada on invasive species in the Great Lakes with a focus on Asian Carp. The event was attended by 37 individuals, including the general public, members of Walpole Island First Nation, and local media.

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