



St. Clair Region Conservation Authority Meeting Highlights – December 12, 2024

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

2025 Budget: The SCRCA Board of Directors approved the 2025 Authority budget of \$11,179,180. The General Levy of \$1,675,950 accounts for approximately 15% of the total budget. The remainder of the funds come from fundraising, government grants, and self-generated funds such as camping fees, and fees for services (e.g., tree planting, permits, education programs, etc.).

Asset Management Plan: Under O. Reg 686/21, Conservation Authorities are required to develop and implement an asset management plan for water and erosion control infrastructure on or before December 31, 2024. Since 2020, the SCRCA has been working with PSD Citywide to develop an asset management plan for all SCRCA assets as a proactive measure to be in line with member municipalities. The Board of Directors approved the completed plan which outlines the current state of assets, risk models, and financial plans to ensure sustainability and feasibility. Several recommendations were provided to guide future improvements of the program. Staff will prioritize based on resources and financial capacity and provide the Board with updates as we move through this process.

Conservation Lands Strategy: Under new regulations prescribed under the *Conservation Authorities Act* in early 2022, the SCRCA completed a Conservation Lands Strategy that provides a clear set of objectives which will inform decision-making related to the management of Conservation Authority owned lands. The strategy underwent public and Indigenous consultation with comments incorporated, as appropriate, in the final draft. The Board of Directors approved the final Conservation Lands Strategy which will be made available to the public on the Authority's website.

Watershed-Based Resource Management Strategy: Under new regulations prescribed under the *Conservation Authorities Act* in early 2022, the SCRCA has completed a draft Watershed-Based Resource Management Strategy. The strategy sets out the guiding principles, objectives, and resources of the SCRCA, its categories of programs and services, and the knowledge base for the work the SCRCA conducts on a day-to-day basis. The strategy underwent public and Indigenous consultation with comments incorporated, as appropriate, in the final draft. The Board of Directors approved the final strategy which will be made available to the public on the Authority's website.

Watershed Conditions: The current flood threat in the St. Clair Region watershed is low. Long-term rainfall amounts for the region are near and/or above their normal

amounts. Water levels on Lakes Huron, St. Clair, and Erie are near their long-term averages for the month of October, but below their averages recorded in October 2023.

Planning and Regulations Activity: Between October 1st and October 31st, 2024, staff issued 21 permits and responded to 51 inquiries under O. Reg 41/24 – *Prohibited Activities, Exemptions, and Permits* under O. Reg 97/04. Additionally, 2 permits were issued during the same timeframe under the *Drainage Act* and Section 28 Regulations Team (DART) protocol. Planning activity between October 1st and October 31st, 2024, included the review and comment on 31 municipal plan input and review files, 1 environmental assessment, and 5 legal inquiries.

St. Clair River Area of Concern – Status of Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs):

Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations – BUI #3

The community engagement process on the recommendation to redesignate this BUI to “not impaired” remains underway. Presentations have been made to the Aamjiwnaang First Nation Environment Committee, at the Walpole Island First Nation Heritage Centre Open House, and to the Walpole Island First Nation community on July 17, 2024.

Restrictions on Drinking Water Consumption or Taste and Odour Problems – BUI #9

Staff received confirmation from Environment and Climate Change Canada on June 13, 2024, that this BUI has been officially redesignated to “not impaired” as per the recommendation of the status assessment report prepared by the Canadian Remedial Action Plan Implementation Committee (CRIC). The Binational Public Advisory Council is considering opportunities for a celebration to recognize this achievement.

Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat – BUI #14

The status assessment report was completed and included a recommendation that this BUI be redesignated too “not impaired”. The CRIC endorsed this recommendation on June 18, 2024, and efforts are currently underway to conduct community engagement, starting with the First Nation communities. A presentation to the Aamjiwnaang First Nation Environment Committee has been scheduled for December 3, 2024.

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