



St. Clair Region Conservation Authority Meeting Highlights – April 21, 2022

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

SCRCA Executive Committee Meetings: The SCRCA is committed to improving governance, accountability, and transparency. As per the legislative requirements under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, all SCRCA general membership Board of Directors meetings have been open to the public, with virtual meetings live-streamed on the Authority's YouTube page during the COVID-19 pandemic. The SCRCA Board of Directors approved the recommendation that moving forward, all Executive Committee meetings are to 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 or the subject matter meets the criteria for a closed meeting as defined in the SCRCA Administrative By-laws.

Highland Glen Conservation Area and Boat Launch: In December 2021, the Board of Directors accepted the recommendation of the Highland Glen Committee to change the designation of the Highland Glen Conservation Area to a local/rural Conservation Area and begin discussions with the Town of Plympton-Wyoming regarding the transition of ownership of the property to the municipality. A Memorandum of Agreement will come into effect on June 1, 2022, which will see the municipality assume responsibility of the property. The funding identified in the 2022 SCRCA budget for repairs to the boat launch will be reallocated to the Town of Plympton-Wyoming to support the rehabilitation of the structure.

Watershed Conditions: Current flood potential in the St. Clair Region watershed is low with average precipitation levels well below normal over the past three months. Great Lake water levels are well below their 2020 all-time record high averaging a drop of 54 cm between Lakes Huron, St. Clair, and Erie. Water levels are forecast to further drop over the next six months but remain above their 103-year long-term water level averages.

Shoreline Projects: The SCRCA continues to work with contractors and local municipalities to complete shoreline protection projects along the Lake Huron and St. Clair River shorelines.

- **Old Lakeshore Road near Penhuron Drive** – Van Bree Drainage and Bulldozing began shoreline work in mid-January with construction on schedule and on budget. All in-water work was completed as of March 31, 2022. The project is expected to be completed this June.

- **Port Lambton Park** – The contract for the Port Lambton Park shoreline restoration project was awarded to Dicocco Contracting Ltd. Construction began in February 2022. The project is progressing well with an expected completion date of May 2022.

SCRCA Biology Department: To encourage uptake and implementation of best management practices (BMPs) and stewardship amongst the agricultural and rural communities, the SCRCA provides relevant information regarding the building of soil health, conservation, and water quality through workshops, conferences, newsletters, and social media. Recent outreach has included:

- March 31, 2022 – “Managing Phosphorus in the Sydenham Watershed” video presentation uploaded to the Sydenham River Species at Risk website (<https://www.sydenhamriver.on.ca/phosphorus>).
- April 21-22, 2022 – “Day in the Life of a Biologist” virtual electrofishing education demonstration for local elementary students.
- April 27, 2022 – Virtual presentation by Stephanie Frischie (Xerces Society) titled “Soil Health and Beneficial Insects: Beyond Bees and Butterflies”.

Staff also 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 including the Sydenham Watershed Phosphorus Management Plan and the Sydenham River Aquatic Species at Risk Threat Inventory.

Planning and Regulations Activity: Between February 1st and March 31, 2022, staff issued 39 permits and responded to 95 inquiries under O. Reg 171/06 *Development, Interference of Wetlands, and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses*. Additionally, 14 permits were issued during the same timeframe under the *Drainage Act* and Section 28 Regulations Team (DART) protocol. Planning activity between February 1st and March 31st included the review and comment on 80 municipal plan input and review files, 5 environmental assessments, and 8 legal inquiries.

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, staff are currently planning to hold the 2022 edition of the Sydenham River Canoe and Kayak Race on Sunday, May 1, 2022. 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.

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