



## St. Clair Region Conservation Authority Meeting Highlights – April 20, 2023

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](http://www.scrca.on.ca/about-us/board-meeting-packages).

**SCRCA Risk Management Program:** In April of 2022, the SCRCA implemented a Risk Management and Land Classification Guideline to recognize, prioritize, and mitigate risk and liability exposure, and to incorporate risk management culture into SCRCA processes, policies, and decisions. Since then, several activities have been completed and/or are on-going including:

- Improved communication of service disruptions on social media and the SCRCA website;
- Third-party security hired to patrol campgrounds;
- The completion of risk assessments at nine Conservation Areas and Lambton County Properties including the identification of common hazards and potential mitigation measures; and
- The completion of 84 property inspections which resulted in 69 work orders created (by the end of 2022, 58 of these work orders had been completed).

**2023-2024 Water & Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) Projects:** The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) issued two calls for project applications to the 2023-2024 Water & Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) funding program. The SCRCA submitted 7 projects with a total WECI funding request of \$765,000. Proposed projects included shoreline protection, repairs and improvements to the W. Darcy McKeough Floodway, and infrastructure projects at the A.W. Campbell and L.C. Henderson Conservation Areas. Applications are reviewed by a committee consisting of Provincial and Conservation Authority staff representatives. If funding is confirmed, a list of approved projects may be available in May 2023.

**Watershed Conditions:** Water levels on the surrounding Great Lakes are projected to remain above average over the next six months. February water levels on Lakes Huron, St. Clair and Erie remained above their long-term average, however Lakes Huron and Erie were both down from their 2020 records highs by 84 cm and 54 cm, respectively. Lake St. Clair was 63 cm below its 1986 record high. Current flood threat is low to moderate owing to lower waters but higher reactivity from saturated soils. Spring rain events have the potential to cause minor, nuisance flooding into natural floodplain areas.

**Planning and Regulations Activity:** Between February 1 and March 31, 2023, staff issued 39 permits and responded to 98 inquiries under O. Reg 171/06 *Development, Interference of Wetlands, and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses*. Additionally, 23 permits were issued during the same timeframe under the *Drainage Act* and Section 28 Regulations Team (DART) protocol. Planning activity between February 1<sup>st</sup> and

March 31<sup>st</sup> included the review and comment on 65 municipal plan input and review files, 4 environmental assessments, and 6 legal inquiries.

**Winter Conservation Education Programs:** The St. Clair Education Team was busy throughout the winter months, delivering in-class sponsored programs to area students. All programs were fully booked, and interest exceeded capacity and funding.

**Aquatic Species at Risk:** Funded by the Canada Nature Fund, this program has engaged over 3,600 students this year, either as an in-class program or connecting virtually to the Aquatic Species at Risk webinar. Webinar recordings have been accessed over 100 times, representing between 100 – 2,500 student viewings.

**Phosphorus 101:** Sponsored by Friends of the St. Clair River, this program introduces students from Grades 8-12 to the issue of phosphorus loading into our watershed and Lake Erie. Over 400 students participated between January and April 2023.

**River Rap:** This Friends of the St. Clair River sponsored program was a great success. Almost 500 students participated between January and March 2023, learning about the St. Clair River.

**Spring Water Awareness Schoolyard Program:** Plains Midstream Canada continues to sponsor this important program that will teach 1,100 students on how to stay safe this April.

**2023 Maple Syrup Festival at A.W. Campbell Conservation Area:** After three years of cancellations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the SCRCA was delighted to welcome visitors back to the A.W. Campbell Conservation Area for the return of the Maple Syrup Festival. Despite frigid temperatures, close to 500 people attended the two-day event held on Saturday, March 18<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, March 19<sup>th</sup>. Demonstrations on the historical production and importance of maple syrup in the lives of First Nations peoples and pioneers were run between 10 am and 3 pm by St. Clair Education Staff. Other activities included guided hikes, kid-friendly crafts/activities, refreshments, horse-drawn wagon rides, and an engaging information booth hosted by the SCRCA Biology department.

The SCRCA Education Team also hosted the Sweet Maple Syrup education program for almost 200 students the week following the festival.

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