



St. Clair Region Conservation Authority Meeting Highlights – June 22, 2023

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

Disposition of Highland Glen and C.J. McEwen Conservation Areas: The SCRCA Board of Directors approved the draft purchase agreements and conservation easements for the disposition of the Highland Glen and C.J. McEwen Conservation Areas to the Municipality of Plympton-Wyoming. In addition, the Board approved the initiation of the 45-day public consultation period required under Section 21(4) of the *Conservation Authorities Act* for the disposition of land. Comments will be received until August 25, 2023. For more details, visit <https://www.scrca.on.ca/scrca-seeking-public-comment-on-disposition-of-highland-glen-and-c-j-mcewen-conservation-areas/>.

McKeough Upstream Land Permitted Uses and Signage: The SCRCA continues to implement the Authority's Risk Management and Land Classification Guidelines. While no permitted uses are identified for the McKeough lands, staff recommended installing signage indicating no public access due to lack of available facilities/infrastructure and concerns over compatibility with other existing uses (agriculture, hunting, etc.). With the exception of the properties listed below, all McKeough Upstream Lands will be posted with No Public Access signage.

McKeough Upstream Lands with Permitted Public Access:

1. Property 56 (Nicol's Memorial)
2. Property 55 (Boat Launch)
3. Property 2 and 3 (McKeough Dam parking lot and public area)

Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) Projects 2023-2024: The SCRCA submitted seven projects for the 2023-2024 intake of the WECI program. Applications were reviewed by a committee of Provincial and Conservation Authority staff representatives and the SCRCA was successful in receiving WECI funding, totaling \$885,000, for five projects. Projects include shoreline repair and restoration along the St. Clair River and Lake Huron shorelines, drainage and fence improvements/repairs at the W. Darcy McKeough Floodway, and walkway decommissioning at the A.W. Campbell Conservation Area.

Planning and Regulations Activity: Between April 1 and May 31, 2023, staff issued 36 permits and responded to 113 inquiries under O. Reg 171/06 *Development, Interference of Wetlands, and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses*. Additionally, 20 permits were issued during the same timeframe under the *Drainage Act* and Section 28 Regulations Team (DART) protocol. Planning activity between April 1st and May 31st included the review and comment on 63 municipal plan input and review files, 5 environmental assessments, and 12 legal inquiries.

Tomorrow's Greener Schools Today - Lambton: The SCRCA and Lambton Public Health were excited to revive the Tomorrow's Greener Schools Today-Lambton program this spring, which sees Authority and Health Unit staff and students from County elementary schools plant trees to increase greenspace and shade in their schoolyards. Throughout the month of May, 59 trees were planted at six school yards in Petrolia, Sarnia, Bright's Grove, Forest, and Corunna. Over 110 students participated in the 2023 initiative which included an educational component that introduces students to the benefits of trees from both a health (e.g., sun protection) and environmental (e.g., wildlife habitat) perspective.

Conservation Education:

Spring conservation education programs continue to be in high demand with 2,500 students scheduled to participate in field trips at the Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area in Petrolia. Additionally, and resulting from challenges associated with bussing, staff are also offering "Nature in Your Neighbourhood" schoolyard programs and expect to see almost 500 students by the end of the school year. St. Clair Education staff continue to run monthly webinars funded by the school boards. Over 5,000 students between the grades FDK and Grade 12 have participated.

Management of Contaminated Sediment in the St. Clair River:

The Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks (MECP), with assistance from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), will take the lead on outreach activities associated with the implementation phase of the St. Clair River Contaminated Sediment project. Outreach will commence once timing for implementation has been confirmed. Dow Canada will be leading the implementation work and covering costs associated with it. The completion of this project is a key action outlined to address two Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) in the St. Clair River Area of Concern.

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